

A
Funeral Sermon,
Preached upon the
DEATH
OF
The truly Vertuous and Religious
GROVE HIRST Esq;
Merchant in *Boston New-England.*
Who departed this Life *October, 28.*
1717. In the *Forty-third Year*
of his Life.

To which is added,
An *Extract from the Private Writings of*
Mr. HIRST, on divers Select and
Important *Heads*, shewing his *Secret*
Walk before GOD in Truth and with
a perfect heart.

By BENJAMIN COLMAN,
Pastor of a Church in Boston.

Joh. XI. 16. Let us also go that we may die with Him.

BOSTON: Printed by B. Green, 1717.

A
Funeral Sermon

Preached upon the

DEATH

The truly Virtuous and Religious
GROVE HIRST Esq;

Merchant in London New-England.
Who departed this Life October, 28.
1717. In the 37th Year



In which is contained a
true and full Account of his
Life, and the several
Particulars of his
Character and
Actions.

By BENJAMIN COLMAN.

Minister of a Church in Boston.

For Sale at the Boston Book Store.

Boston: Printed by B. Green, 1717.

[i]
DEDICATION
To the Honourable
Judge SEWALL.

SIR,

AS soon as I came into the *Inten-*
tion by GOD's leave and help,
of Publishing the following
Sermon, which was made upon
the lamented *Death* of your most Excel-
lent *Son-in-Law*, Mr. HIRST, and of
adding to it those *Extracts* out of his
own *Writings* which will I hope be a
welcome *Present* to you ; I immedi-
ately determined within my Self to ask
your Leave to make the *Dedication* of the
Whole to *your Honour*. For as Mr.
HIRST was many ways dear to you,
and highly esteemed by you while he
lived, and that upon the best Accounts ;
(No

(No One being better *Acquainted* with his true Worth, nor more inclin'd to *value* it) so I am perswaded it will be grateful to you, principally for the Good of others, that his *Character* should be given and his *Name* live awhile therein, and that his *own Remains* will be precious to you and fragrant to all serious Persons, as an Ointment poured forth.

Nor could I but *Condole* with you on an Occasion so very sorrowful as this *Amazing Breach* was to you: (to use your own *Words* and the *phrase* wherein I heard you three times over speak of this most *Afflictive Providence*;) for it came rolling in upon you like a *wide Breaking in of Waters*, Wave after wave; it being but *Nine days* before that GOD took away from you the *Desire of your Eyes*, the *Wife of your Youth* and the *Companion of your Life and Age*; and not *Sixteen Months* before you had the Sorrow of accompanying Mr. *HIRST* to the

DEDICATION. iii

the Grave of his *Wife*, your worthy *Daughter*; And now in the Day wherein you were made *desolate* your Self, the Divine Providence hath cast a little *Flock* and lovely *Family* of *Grand-Children* upon you; to Whom you were before a *Father*, and for their sakes your *Joy* had been always great to behold them under the Wing of a *Parent* so wise, so tender, so pious as Mr. HIRST was.

But *they* were then and are now under the *Wing* of GOD's *Covenant*, and in the *Shadow* of that they are Comfortable and Safe; while the DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY || is displayed to be Adored by you: *Behold He taketh away; who can hinder Him? who will say to Him, What doest Thou?*

YOU, Sir, are the Only *Parent* now left to Mr. HIRST's *Children*. Within Six Months and a few days the Sovereign GOD has taken away the Three

|| Dr. MATHERS Sermon Preach'd upon the Death of Mrs. SEWALL.

other Grand-Parents. Yea within one dark *Fortnight* they were made *trebly Orphans*. For on the *Nineteenth* of *October* 1717, died their *Grand-Mother* SEWALL, your *Gracious Consort*; On the *Twenty-eighth* of the same Month GOD took away their *FATHER* from them, and on the *First Day* of *November* following their *Honoured Grand-Father*, WILLIAM HIRST Esq; of *Salem*, Expired; worn out under his returning pains of the *Gout*, and crush'd as it were under the surprizing *Death* of his *Son*, the *Crown* and the *Joy* of his *Age*, of Whom he trusted (as GOD said to *Jacob* concerning *Joseph*) that he should have put his *Hands* upon his *Eyes* to close 'em.

We thank GOD (Sir) who continues *You* to this *Day*, not a *FATHER* only to one *Branch* and another of your *Family*; but to your *Country* also; whereof you are a *Son*, and have been long a *Servant* and an *Ornament*, in many *Places* of *Trust* and *Honour*. It

DEDICATION. 19

It will doubtless please you to see the Piety of Mr. HIRST to his Deceased MOTHER and WIFE, in the Characters drawn of Them by him, while he mourn'd before GOD his own loss in their Death — He herein fulfilled both parts of *Solomons Words*, *Her Children rise up & call her blessed; Her Husband also & he praiseth her.* Had he liv'd to this Day, no doubt but he had wrote down the just and true Tho'ts of his Heart concerning his Mother SEWALL. And had he according to the Course of Nature, and your Hopes, liv'd to have follow'd his own FATHER and your SELF to your Tomb, his filial Piety and the high Reverence he bore you both would have led him with an Irresistable force of Affection to have *Imbalm'd your Names* also. Nor will you ever be able to forget the *most Christian, solemn and endearing Leave*, which Mr. HIRST took of his *Aged Father* and your *Self* the Friday before he died, ordering You

vi DEDICATION.

two only to be with him in the Chamber when he did it.

But the *Years* your Children deceas'd are denied on Earth, are I trust gain'd in *Heaven*. And it must needs be very Consolatory to you to think — *how many of yours are there before you*. May it please GOD to spare you yet to your Country and to your Family and to continue to you a *useful Old-Age*, with *growing Measures* of Grace & Comfort, and the *Peace of the Upright* in your Death.

Sir, I must yet ask your Patience while I add, That we have follow'd of late a great many *Aged & Pious Persons* to their Graves, both Men and Women, who have liv'd and finish'd well, to the Praise of GOD's Grace. And GOD has *come near* to your Self in these Deaths, not only in that you mourn a *Vertuous Consort* and *Son-in-Law* in this Number, but also in the Death of *THREE* of the *Honourable Council Board*, where you have
to

DEDICATION. ivii

so long sat with them: *viz.* WALT WINTHROP Esq; ELISHA HUTCHINSON Esq; and ANDREW BELCHER Esq; Three of the *Sons* of *New-England* who have approv'd themselves among the Faithful *Servants* and kind *Fathers* of their Country.

Particularly on two Accounts I bring Mr. BELCHER'S Name and Memory into these Papers: *First*, because that while I was composing the following *Discourse* he lay upon his *Death-Bed*, and when I waited upon him at his desire I had the pleasure of seeing my *Text* out-done; for his Serenity and Brightness was without a *Cloud*, without a *Fear*, without a *Tear* save of Satisfaction and Joy; willing and desirous to die. And the *other Reason* of my naming Mr. BELCHER is, because that among many other *bright Passages* which flow'd from his *dying lips*, this was *One* which he spake to his SON; (for *whose Restoration* to us from the Brink or the Grave, I am desirous also to make this Publick *Acknowledgment* to GOD) — “My Case (said he) is widely different from Mr. HIRST'S; for GOD hath been *better* to me than his Word; for I am

one

one Tear above the Period of Humane Life as *Moses* fixt it in his time. Besides (added He) that I have liv'd to see *my Children all grown up* and settled in the World, while Good Mr. HIRST is called away from *all his in their Childhood*

This was indeed a great part of the *Darkness* upon Mr. HIRST and on his *Friends* in his Death? And the contrary Favour of Providence help'd to brighten Mr. BELCHERS way for him thro the *dark Valley and Shadow*. At Mr BELCHERS Age and under the Circumstances of his *Children*, Death would have had quite another face to Mr. HIRST. But so much the greater was the Trial and the Display of his Faith, and Submission to the Will of GOD, on Whose *Covenant Faithfulness* he cast *Himself* and *His*. To *That* (Sir) I commend *You* and the dear *Orphans*, your *new Care* and Charge ; And am,

Your Honours

most Humble and

Obedient Servant

Boston, Decemb.

12. 1717.

Benj. Colman.

To my Esteemed Friend
Mrs. Elizabeth Price
the Vertuous Consort of
Major Walter Price
of Salem.

Madam,

YOU are too distress'd a *Mourner* and too deep a Sharer in the *Bereavement* which occasioned the following *Discourse*, and my *Sympathy* with you is too particular and tender, for me to Omit your *Name* in these my last *Respects* to your dear *Brother*. How hard it was to YOU, the Only DAUGHTER & SISTER of the Family, to follow so Good a FATHER and such a BROTHER to their Graves, within the short Space of a single *Week*, that Heart must be little *Humane* and less *Christian* that is insensible. Your *Comforters* also, both by *Inclination* and *Office*, : it has pleas'd the Sovereign GOD to remove from you, since the Day of the fore-mentioned *Breaches* on you ; I mean Both your Honoured *Pastors*, the Reverend Mr. NOYES and Mr. CURWIN ; which makes it the more needful and allowable for me now to minister unto your support.

You

DEDICATION.

You will read here in one line with how great an Esteem your deceased Brother regarded you: I mean a line in *his Letter to his Daughter* which I could not prevail with my self to Omit, tho' I was conscious I should displease you by inserting it. I need not say to you how much you must esteem your Self bound to be a Mother to the Four Orphan-Daughters: And my Prayer for Mr. PRICE and your Self is, that you may shine in the same good Spirit of Sanctity which adorn'd the Deceased; and both in Secret and Publickly may transcribe in your Lives what you have seen, and what you may here read, of his Walk with GOD.

May You have the Gracious Visits of your SAVIOUR in your Sorrows, as the weeping Sisters of Lazarus had; and feel the power of his Words to *Martha*, and live upon them; JESUS said unto her, *I am the Resurrection and the Life: He that believeth in me, tho' he were dead yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea LORD.*

I am, MADAM

Your Sincere Friend

& very Humble Servant

Benjamin Colman.

*A Holy Walk
before G O D in Truth.*

ISAIAH XXXVIII. 2, 3.

*Then Hezekiah turned his face toward
the Wall, and prayed unto the Lord,
and said, Remember now O Lord, I
beseech thee, how I have walked before
thee in Truth, and with a perfect heart,
and have done that which is good in
thy sight : And Hezekiah wept sore.*

THE Person here spoken of was
both Great and Good; One
of the Kings of Judah, and
one of the best of his Line.
He was a wise and religious
Prince, and God made him Mighty and Re-
nown'd. As he was eminent and distin-
guisht in his Piety, so was he honour'd and

B

made

made Famous by Providence; and the Story now before us did in a particular manner make him so. His Case was now truly extraordinary and very peculiar: He was Sick unto Death, and had a Message bro't to him from God by the Prophet *Isaiab*, to set his house in Order, for he should die and not live. It was a very surprizing Summons to him, and no doubt very astonishing to all that were about him, even to the good Prophet himself, whom it went nearest to, altho' he could not but do the Errand which God sent him on with a ready Obedience and a profound Reverence. It was an Amazing thing both to the Prince and to all his Servants, that now in the midst of his Days and of his Prosperity and Glories; the Work of Reformation and the Restoration of Religion scarce finish'd by him, and in the midst of his Triumphs over the Blasphemies of *Rabshakeh*, and in the destruction of the *Assyrian Army*; (if indeed that Glorious Event of Providence was over before the time of this Sickness and Recovery of the King,) that on a sudden a Prince so Young, so Pious, and who had began to Reign so well, and had been hitherto so remarkably own'd and honour'd

by God; One that was already so great a Blessing to the Church of God, and from whose Life the Pious in Israel had reasonably very great expectations of much more Good! how strange, how dark and mysterious a Providence was it, both to Himself, to the Prophet and to his People that he must now instantly prepare to Die, and not be allow'd to finish the Work he had so well began, and wherein his heart was so steddily and divinely engaged. Thus Dark to us are the Footsteps of Providence very often, in the *untimely Decease* (as nature and sense would lead us to say) of *Excellent and Useful Persons*. But it is a thing common to observe, and prov'd by frequent Instances every where, "That neither
 "Greatness or Goodness can exempt from
 "Sickness, from sore and mortal Sicknesses;
 "but in the midst of Life we are in Death.
 "Twice, very lately, *Isaiab* had been the
 "Messenger of good Tydings to this Pious
 "King, but now of heavy Tydings to him
 "and *Israel*; scil. That his Disease was in
 "it self Mortal, and without a Miracle
 "would be certainly fatal; that therefore
 "he should immediately set his heart and
 "house in Order and prepare to Die.

Now our *Text* relates the Action and Behaviour of this gracious Prince upon this *Message* from God unto him. He immediately set himself to do as he was warned and advised. He received the *Message* with Reverence, with Faith and Fear: Then *Hzekiah* turned his face toward the Wall, and prayed to the Lord, and said, Remember now O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth and with a perfect Heart, &c.

Here observe,

1. He turned his face unto the Wall. Off from a vain, a glittering, or a sorrowful World; which what had he now any more to do with? He turned from it for he was to leave it; and to bid it farewell for ever. He turned away also for privacy in Prayer: He turned from the Company that were there present that he might pour out his Soul unto God with the greater Freedom and Fervency. Some think too that he turn'd his Face as well as he could toward the Temple the place of Prayer, that he might pray toward that place, according to the Letter of the Word which God spake by Solomon in the Dedication of it; and as was the practice of Holy Men in those Days and afterward.

2. He

2. *He prayed to the LORD.* Is any afflicted, let him pray? Is any Sick, let him be pray'd with and for; and let him pray for himself to be sure; and if he draw nigh to Death let him pray the more fervently. *Hezekiah* had been us'd to pray, especially in times of Danger, and he had experienc'd the wonderful power and prevalence of Prayer at such Times. He had found (says *Mr. Henry*) that the Prayers of Faith bring in Answers of Peace; and happy Returns of Prayer are Engagements and Encouragements to continue Instant in Prayer. The Sentence of Death pass'd upon him did not appear to him Absolute and Irreversible; and he knew well that if it "might be Revers'd it must be by Prayer. "But whether it could be revers'd or no, "by Prayer he was to prepare for Death, "and derive Strength and Grace from God to finish well. When *Nathan* told *David* once that his Child should die, yet *David* fasted and prayed till he saw it Dead, for said he, — *Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that it may yet live.* Now *Hezekiah* might remember that gracious Act of his Father *David*, and go upon the same principle.

3. We

3. We have *his Prayer* : the *Words* of it : and it was short and sweet and very powerful ; full of Grace, and full of devout Affection. In it I would observe,

1. *The Humility and Earnestness of it* : *I beseech thee O Lord*. Prayer is a beseeching God, of his own free Grace and for his own Name sake, to do that for us which our Needs do require, and which his Glory may allow. The Suppliant in beseeching *lies low* before God, and he is very *Earnest* with him in his Petition or he does not *beseech* at all.

2. *The Matter of his Prayer*, or the *Petition* it self, *Remember now how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*. A glorious and blessed Prayer from the mouth of a *dying Man*.

1. *We need then that God should remember us, and we may then remember him of all that he has done for us, and wro't in us, and enabled us to do for his Name ; and of all that we further need to be done for us*. Not that God needs to be remembred of any thing, but he allows us to speak to him after our manner, and is pleas'd to see us remember *his Grace* to us and *our Needs* before him.

Can

Can God forget his *Saints*? and least of all in the Article of their *Death*? *Precious* are they always in his Eyes, and most of all then; when they most of all need his Presence, Grace and Help. Remember me *Now* O Lord, said the *dying King*. *Now* in the Article of Death. *Now* in the last scene of Life, which is usually so dark difficult and distressing, and always so important a season: When Nature is giving up, so great a Change is coming on, and the Unchangeable Eternal World is to be entred into. *Now* spare me, or receive me. *Now* remember O Lord thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old: Remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions: According to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O Lord.

2. But *what* in particular would he now remember God of, and beg that God would remember with respect to him? Why, *how* he had walked before God in truth and with a perfect heart, and had done that which was Good in his sight. We may humbly remember before God, and we may confide in him that he will mercifully remember for us, all the Grace which he pleases to bestow upon us, and all the Good that he enables

us to do ; all his good Work in us, and all the good Works which by his Grace we ever perform to his Glory ; all our holy Walking before him and all his gracious Dealings with us. So holy *Nebemiah* look'd back on all that God had done for him, and all that he had Enabled him to do for God and his People, and said, *Lord remember me for Good according to it all, and blot not out my Good Deeds.* He spake in Faith that God would remember them ; not as works of Righteousness done by him, nor for his Justification before God and Acceptance with him ; as if there were any Meritorious Righteousness in what he had done ; but God having wro't this in him and done this for him, gave him Confidence toward God that he would now remember for him his promised Mercies according to his Word and Covenant. "Lord, it is thy own Work and thou wilt own it.

Observe in this part of the Text,

1. *The Conscience that Hezekiah had of his own Integrity, Sincerity and Uprightness. I have — in Truth and with a perfect Heart.* These Words sound high and may seem too much for the Mouth of a sinful Man. But you must understand them, as they are in deed

deed meant, in a *qualified sense*, comporting with the present state of Man, wherein we are compass'd with infirmity and very defective in our best Attainments; As we know certainly that *Hezekiah* was, and so were *Noah* and *Job* and *David*, of whom we read the like thing that their hearts were perfect with God, and this their perfection in his sight is explain'd with respect to them, as it is here with respect unto *Hezekiah*, to mean only Sincerity and Uprightness. So *Job* was perfect and upright. So *Hezekiah's* Truth and a perfect Heart are synonymous in the Text. So *David* walked in Integrity of heart and in uprightness, 1 Kin. 9. 4. This is Evangelical Perfection, what the Covenant of Grace in Christ requires, and all that the Grace of God raises his Children and Saints to in this Life. "Sincerely and with a honest mind, humane frailty excepted; with a right intention, from a right principle, and by the Rule of God's Word, he had aim'd, and acted for his Glory.

2. Observe the Evidence which he brings in proof of this his sincerity, and whereon he builds his good hope and confidence concerning it: And that is his holy Walk, and doing that which was good in Gods sight. Thus his Faith

and Love wro't by works, and by works they were made perfect. This is God's Law to us and His Demand of us, Gen. 17. 1. *Walk before me and be thou perfect.* 1 Kin. 8. 61. *Let your heart be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes and to keep his commandments.* 9. 4. *If thou wilt walk before me as David thy Father walked in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments.* Here is the sure Trial of Uprightness, of Truth in the inward part; the sure Test of a perfect Heart.

It was very true of *Hezekiah* that he had done the things that were right and pleasing in God's sight. He means particularly his Restoring and Supporting to his utmost the true Worship of God and Obedience to His Laws. See the 18 Chap. 3 ver. (& 22 Chap. 2 ver.) *Asa* and *Josiah* did the like and left the same Character behind them that *Hezekiah* did. And it teaches us to look to our Life and Conversation that this be regular and exemplary; for if our hearts be right with God, our walk will be so before Him. Wherefore if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit; and if ye call upon the Father, who without respect of Persons judgeth according

according to every mans works, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

3. *Hezekiah makes his dying Appeal to God as the Witness of his Sincerity, and his Judge. Remember O Lord (says he) how I have walked before thee and in thy sight. This was a very solemn and awful thing, and happy the Person that can do it humbly and heartily when he comes to die. God that made us knows us thoroughly, better than we know our selves. He is greater than our hearts and knows all things. We can only say before Him, so far as we know our own hearts. To Him we must refer the Exploration, and to His Infallible Judgment (who is Supream, Omniscient and most True) we must stand. Psal. 139. ult. Search me O God and know my heart, try me and know my tho'ts, and see if there be any wicked way in me. We may be deceived in our selves, but God cannot be deceived, nor can he deceive us. Jer. 17. 9, 10. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, & according to the fruit of his Doings. The perfect heart sets God ever present before its eye, and it self ever under His Eye; it ever acts with an eye towards*

God, and walks as before His Face. So David instructed & charged Solomon, 1 Chron. 28. 9. *And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, & with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.* Now to be able to refer it to this All-seeing, Heart-searching God —, and to say — *Remember how I have walked before thee in truth* —, What a glorious thing is it, and what a glorious dying, finishing Act is it?

4. This good King pleads it now with God in a dying hour; he makes a humble mention of it, and useth it as an Argument: *Lord remember now I beseech thee how I have walked before thee.* Thus we may come even to his Seat and fill our mouths with Arguments. Yea in our darkest hours, and under the severest Messages which He sends to us in the whole course and dispensation of His Providence we may do so. Even if He slay us, we may open our mouth to plead with him. And this Plea here becomes the mouth of every Saint that is able to use it, while he lives and when he comes to die. There is no pride, no boasting in it; to acknowledge to God what He has done for our Souls. No, be it told and known

to the honour of free Grace that wro't it :
Not I but Christ in me. Be it ever kept in
 Remembrance, and be it an occasion de-
 cently mentioned in Prayer, by the happy
 (happy) Child of God for his own comfort.
 Be it his *Rod and his Staff* in all the dark
 hours of his Pilgrimage, and in the darker
Valley of the shadow of Death at the end there-
 of : *Remember now O Lord I beseech thee how*
I have &c. Thus *Hezekiah* gave Glory to
 God, and comforted himself, and begg'd for
 his Life.

But beyond all this, it is plain that *Heze-
 kiah* means by this plea to move God to
 spare him, and grant him a *Reprieve* from
 the present Execution of the Sentence of
 Death pass'd upon him. The Argument is
 that God would at this time give him his Life
 at his Petition. So we are to understand him,
 for so God did, and accordingly answer'd
 him; for before *Isaiab* was gone out into the
 middle of the Court the Word of the Lord
 came to him, saying, *Turn again and tell He-
 zekiah the Captain of my People; Thus saith*
the Lord, the God of David thy Father, I have
heard thy Prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold
I will heal thee: the third day thou shalt go up
to the House of the Lord, & I will add unto
thy days Fifteen Tears. But

But you will say to me, How was this a plea with God *for the sparing and prolonging of Hezekiah's Life*? It was a very good Argument why he should chearfully die, resign, bow his head and give up the Ghost; it was eno^t to make him willingly and gladly commit his going Spirit into the hands of God *as a faithful Creator*. It would have made him say, one would have thought, Lord take me then, take me quickly! I am ready to be offered, and the time (the blessed time) of my Departure is come; *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness*: a brighter and richer and more noble Crown than what I have worn on Earth; and a more glorious Throne than that I go from. — But what can this Plea mean, — *I beseech thee O Lord remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart*; and therefore Lord don't cut me off now, but spare me a little longer?

To this I answer in short, that (according to the sense of many great *Expositors*) I take his meaning to be this, that he had *no Son*, no *Heir* to succeed him in the Throne; and he could not tell how to reconcile it to
the

the *Covenant & Promise* which God had made with *David* and his Seed the Kings of *Judah*. For *Manasseh* the Son and Successor of *Hezekiah* was not born till Three Years after this Sickness and Recovery to which our Text relates. Wherefore *Hezekiah* being yet Childless, and receiving such a Message that he must now die and not live any longer ; he pleads with God how this could consist with his Covenant Promise to *David* and his Sons, the Kings of *Judah*, of which Line the *Messiah* was to Spring ; or at least he pleads that *the Promise might not fail in him* ; seeing that he could appeal to God that he had *walked before Him in Truth, &c.*

This was the Condition in particular of the *Covenant of Royalty* given unto *David*, and to his Seed his Successors in the Kingdom of *Judah*, whereof *Hezekiah* was one ; and it behoved him to be able to plead that Condition in some measure answer'd on his part : 1 Kin. 8. 25. *Therefore now Lord God of Israel, keep with thy Servant David my Father that thou promisest him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the Throne of Israel ; so that thy children take heed to their way, and that they walk before me as he walked.* Well, *Hezekiah* had so walked thro'

thro' Grace, and no doubt but it is *this Covenant of God to David and his Seed* which he remembers now before God; and might have added upon it, — *And now, O God of Israel, let thy word I pray thee be verified, which thou spakest unto thy Servant David my Father,* i. e. Concerning his Seed and his Family.

And you must add this further Consideration upon this matter, That if he died without a Son, not only was he cut off as to any Posterity from the Succession to the Throne of Judah, but also *from being one of the Progenitors of the Messiah* according to the Flesh. An honour and felicity by far greater than a Temporal Crown in the opinion of so religious a Prince. For this Reason he might plead here so earnestly to live a little longer; and for this he might *weep sore*.

Which is the Fourth and last Thing to be considered in the Text.

4. *To his fervent Prayer this pious dying King added many tears. And Hezekiah wept sore!* What did he weep so for? Was it that he was going to Heaven? Was it that he had liv'd and reign'd so well on Earth? Was it that he had the Conscience of his Integrity in so great & good a Degree as he expresses? Did his happy peace and comfort constrain
Tears

Tears of Joy ? Truly his tears were not without a Mixture of blessed Hope, and some happy Measures of Joy. He could not utter these Words and yet despond or sink. What is strange is that there could be so great a mixture and measure of Sorrow.

But *Expositors* have collected many *Reasons* of this good Kings Tears, and those such as became his *Piety* as well as might also infer *Infirmity*. It might grieve him to die *without Issue*, as I said before, and that the *Entail* of the *Crown* must be cut off from him as to any Son to succeed him : of this it may be he was too fond, and suffer'd enough for it (had he liv'd to see it) in the prodigious impiety of his Son. It might grieve him more yet because by this Sentence of Death *the Messiah* was not to spring from his loins ; which was the last honour and dignity that the Pious *Dau'ters* and Godly *Kings of Judah* were ambitious of. He might weep sore on such a sudden and surprizing Summons from the *natural dread of Death* which is common to Man ; and because it might look to him as a sharp Message and a *Threatningfull of Anger* and holy Displeasure from his Gracious God and Father whom he had desir'd to see, while he liv'd ; and could not re-

collect presently what he had done to provoke him thus to shorten his days, and cut off his Life with a stroke. He set himself therefore to think what he had done, and "was not conscious to himself of any gross Exorbitances in the course of his Life; but pleads before God his Uprightness in the main. He fear'd lest he had incurr'd the Wrath of his Heavenly Father, and with a filial Reverence went upon the searching out the cause and reason of it. Moreover, *the hope of Eternal Life was not so clearly reveal'd to the Old Testament Saints*, and it is no wonder if they were not so ready and easy to leave this World as the *New-Testament Saints* have been; who are *begot to a more lively hope of the Incorruptible Inheritance by the Resurrection and Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Besides, the *Crowns and Thrones of Princes* are tempting things, and the most pious of them in all Generations are apt to have their hearts too much pleas'd in their Earthly Portion. But principally methinks this religious Prince might *weep for his People, and the weak distracted and bazardous state wherein he was like to leave the Church and State both*. Religion, which was just reviv'd a little under his Influence and Authority, he might fear would
die

die again, and the People degenerate and apostatize again into *Idolatry*; from which he had rescu'd them. He might know almost that after his Decease they would relapse to their *Idols*, and the true God would be again forsaken, and so Wrath to the uttermost come upon *Israel*. As a Father of his People he wept for the *Ruine* impending over them. He might expect that the *Assyrian War* would return, and might fear *Intestine Wars* at home, from strifes about a *Succession*; and on the prospect of such Evils, from which he was to be taken, he might be almost Overwhelm'd; for he was a very tender Prince, and the Interest of God lay very near his heart.

For one or other, or all of these Reasons together might *Hezekiah weep sore*; and there was cause eno' for it without any disparagement to his princely or gracious spirit. Let "his Prayer interpret his Tears, says Mr. "Henry, and we find nothing that speaks him "under that fear of Death which has either "Bondage or Torment. Surely it is good to die thus: So let me die, and my last End be like this.

I have been thus long in Opening the Text, for which I would now make some Excuse, but that it may be I never bro't you before

a more proper, full and teaching *Sermon*. I have no time now to enlarge on the *Doctrinal Notes and Observations* I had intended to have spoken to from the Words, which are these *Four*.

I. *That a Dying Hour will soon come upon every one of us, the Greatest and the Least, and it may be very sudden and surprizing, even to the best and most prepared.* Death will shortly bring the Message and serve the Summons on us, *Set thy House and get thy Heart in Order, for thou must Die and not Live.* What warning he may give us we know not; it may be none; nor any time to prepare to go with him, if we do not get ready now beforehand for his coming to us. He has neither respect to Age, nor Piety, nor outward Condition: he observes no Ceremony with one more than another, but calls at the *Palace-door*, as he does at the *Cottage*, *Come away thou Mortal!* and go he must, whoever he be, Old or Young, the Strong Man or the Weakling, Rich or Poor, Bond or Free, High or Low, Good or Bad: for there is *no man that hath power over the spirit to retain it, neither has he power in the day of Death, & there is no discharge in that war: Wickedness cannot deliver*

deliver those that are given to it, neither has Vertue, Piety, Usefulness any exemption from its Arrest and Stroke: We see that wise men die, also the fool and the brutish person perish: What man is he that liveth and shall not see death, shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the Grave? There is not another thing so known and certain as the Certainty of our dying within a little time, and the Uncertainty of the time when or the manner how; and yet there is not again a thing of any Importance to us so little realiz'd and so hard to realize, so little considered, so little fear'd and prepar'd for. In this respect the misery of Man is great upon him: Not so much because he must Die as that he won't be brought to think seriously of it. Eccl.9.12. For man also knoweth not his time: As the fishes are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them. But whether Men will think or no and prepare for the coming of Death, that will not stay a moment beyond its appointed time, nor can they continue one moment after it: Job 11. 10. If he cut off, and shut up, and gather together; then who can hinder him? for he seeth vain men; he seeth wickedness

edness also ; will he not then consider it ? The Sovereignty of God is eminent in this matter. Job 34. 13, 14, &c. Who hath given him a charge over the Earth ? or who hath disposed the whole World ? If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit & his breath ; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust. — In a moment they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight & pass away, and the Mighty shall be taken away without hands : for his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

II. I might have observed to you, *That the Hour of Death is a very awful and solemn time when it doth come, and is usually very dark and distressing to the Children of Men.* It is a great and fearful thing to Die after the best Preparation that can be made for it. More especially according as the *Temper* of Persons may be ; if they are naturally and have been habitually *timorous* and *scrupulous*, and on the fearing side. O 'tis a trying time both to Nature and Grace. To *Nature* it is very terrible. Death wears a *gastly* and a *hideous* face to the senses of Mankind. The gasps of a dying Body, the face of a forsaken Corpse, and the putrification of the rotting Grave, are

a dark and melancholly Scene to the minds of Men to contemplate. Yet the Spirit of a Man may get above all this, because it is the common and universal lot of Mankind, and what must of necessity be submitted to. But Religion adds to the Terrors of Death, shewing it as the righteous and fearful Punishment of Sin, and the dreadful Curse of a Holy God against it; and not only so, but Religion shews it as only the beginning of the blackness of Darknes to the Wicked: *After Death the Judgment: The pale Horse and Hell following it. The sting of Death is Sin, and the Curse of God out against the Sinner is like the Ghost that pass'd before Eliphaz, and made all his Bones to shake and the hair of his head to stand up. The Wicked is thus driven away in his Wickedness, and tho' the Righteous hath hope in his Death, yet in his best hopes it may be exceeding awful to him to remember that Glorious and Fearful Name the Lord his God, and to consider himself on the brink of the Eternal World; and going to appear before his Holy Judge. The thing is of that vast Moment and Consequence, the Change before us is so amazing a One, and our best Preparations are so poor, that no wonder if a sober serious heart be filled*

filled with utmost concern and distress. Let us by frequent previous Meditation on that coming hour, seriously realize to our selves how it will appear to us; and by a timely Preparation therefor make it safe and peaceful. I go on therefore to a *Third Observation*.

III. *That the Testimony of Conscience to our Integrity and Uprightness in our Walk with God, and that we have aim'd to do those things that are pleasing in His Sight will then be found our sweetest comfort, and most sure support.* So Hezekiab found it, having this living hope in his dying moments, — *Lord remember how I have walked before thee in Truth, &c.* This is our Rejoycing while we live and when we come to die, *That in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the Grace of God we have our Conversation in the World,* 2 Cor. I. 10. O how shall we need this Witness to stand by us when Death comes to look us in the face. If our hearts then condemn us not we have peace with God; it is the Testimony of GOD Himself in us and for us. It is more than ten Thousand Witnesses about us, or the Testimony of Men and Angels; *the witness of God is Greater, our Consciences bearing us witness in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God witnessing with*

our Spirit. It is the Office of the *Holy Spirit*, and under him the Office of *Conscience*, to comfort the Godly. God has commissioned *Conscience* to be his *Vice-gerent* in us : Honour and Majesty has He put upon him, and he is a *Sovereign Comforter*. *If he giveth quietness*, and his Judgment be according to Truth, then who can give trouble? It is as Christ said to His Disciples, Joh. 16. 22. *Your heart shall rejoyce, and your joy no man taketh from you*. Let ten Thousand false *Witnesses* rise up against the Saint, let *Satan* suggest a Thousand Accusations and shoot all his fiery darts, he that has his own *Conscience* on his side may face and despise them all ; as *St. Paul* at the Bar (a Prisoner and arraigned as a Criminal) earnestly beheld his Judges and said, — *Men and Brethren I have lived in all good Conscience unto this day*, Act. 23. 1. Which of his Judges had an equal serenity of mind & countenance as he had that Moment ! doubtless they beheld as it were the face of an Angel. A good *Conscience* may not only give a Man boldness to look Death in the face undaunted, but also a humble confidence before the Son of Man ; great boldness in the Faith thro' this Life, and boldness in the day of Judgment. 1 Joh. 4. 17. For Consci-

ence being the Substitute of our Judge, His Authoriz'd Representative, and absolving in His Name and from His Word, what can more assure a Person ; *that when He shall appear we may have Confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His Coming*, 1 Joh. 2. 28. This ministers to us our Cordials in our Sicknes, and makes our Bed soft and easie to us, and pours Oil into our Wounds ; and chases away the shades of Death, and brightens our last Moments ; giving us peace in our End, if not Enabling us to expire Triumphantly. Our Friends stand by helpless in a dying hour, and our Worldly circumstances profit not, but a friendly Conscience then is to a Man like an *Angel of the Lord strengthening him* in the Agonies of Nature, and says to him, *Fear not ; thou hast been a good and faithful Servant and the Joy of thy Lord is before thee.*

But if we would look for this Refreshment in a dying hour from the Testimony of Conscience, let us *reverence* it now, and hearken to its Voice and be Obedient to it. Let us now keep a good Conscience, *void of offence toward God and Man ;* let us take care not to defile and wound it, not to do it outrage, nor show it any neglect and disrespect ;

respect ; let us get it purged and pacified *sprinkled from an evil Conscience in the Blood of Christ*, cleansed and healed by renewing *Grace*, and by Faith which purifies the Soul ; and then we may be *always Confident*, and *hold fast the Rejoycing of hope firm to the End*.

There is yet One more *Observation* I have to make, and so I shall draw to a close : it is this,

IV. *That where there is this good Testimony of Conscience for a Man in some happy degree, as he draws near to Death, never the less there may be a pretty strong desire of Life, fears to Die, and tears at the Approach of a happy Dissolution.* Hezekiah was a strange and wonderful instance of something like this ; for altho' he was able to Pray so comfortably in the prospect of Approaching Death, yet he meant it very much as a Prayer for a further time of Life if it might please God to grant him his Petition ; for tho' we may allow that he was *not Afraid to Die*, yet it is very manifest that he was *very desirous to Live longer*, and as he Pray'd for this he *wept sore*.

The desire of Life is in it self Natural and Innocent, if it be with entire Submission to

the Sovereign Will of God. *Moses* begg'd earnestly of God in that matter for himself, 'till God bid him *say no more to Him of it*. And our Glorious Lord Himself deprecated *His Cup*, with a perfect Innocence of that Nature of ours which He assumed, *Father if it may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done : Not as I will but as thou wilt*. For the Joy before Him He endured the Cross and despised the shame ; yet He sweat as it were drops of Blood in the exceeding Sorrows of His Soul, and offer'd up Prayers and Supplications *with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from Death, and was heard in that He feared*, Heb. 5. 7. This He did *tho' He were a Son*, the Only-begotten and Beloved Son in whom God was well pleased ; and how much more may an *Adopted Child* of God meet his Decease with fear and trembling.

Nature will struggle and reluct against the Dissolving the Union between Soul & Body. It is *Humane* to feel this, for the Body is a part of us ; and we are to leave so many lov'd *Relations* and Friends behind us still in the Body, who have been our *Delight* or are our *Care* ; who as it were twine about the departing Spirit by their Interest in its affections,

ons, and endeavour to hold it back, and entreat its stay with their flowing Tears. Nor is it barely humane, but *Religion* enters also in this natural exercise of our affections, and insensibly mixes with it; as the *Writing of Hezekiab* shows when he was recover'd of his Sickness: — *I said in the cutting off my days, I shall go to the Gates of the Grave, I am deprived of the residue of my years: I said I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord any more in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more with the Inhabitants of the World*, ver. 10, 11. That is to say, He had not only his Domestic cares and his affections to his *Family* to break thro'; but his superiour love to and the pleasure he had taken in the *Communion of Saints* here below, and the *Assemblies of the Worshippers of God*, those Excellent Ones of the Earth in whom was all his Delight; with whom he had had sweet fellowship, and gone unto the House of God in Company; leading them thither, and speaking comfortably to them there. But at last we are too Sensitive and Earthly, and need to get a clearer & stronger sight of the Heavenly Canaan, and of our Evidences also of our part therein, so as to desire to depart; and yet even then too it may appear to us, as it did to *Hezekiab* and to *Paul*,
that

that to abide in the flesh for a while longer may be *needful* on many Accounts, if God may think good.

Let us not wonder then if we see some of the brightest for real Grace and Goodness, under cloudy Fears and Apprehensions when they come to Die, and that they dissolve in Tears before God, before whom they have walked in truth and with a perfect heart. Let it not stumble us to hear them pray, —
O take me not away in the midst of my days,
 — *O spare me that I may recover strength before I go hence and am no more.* But you must allow for the invincible Infirmary, as well as Modesty and Humility of many gracious Souls; and remember too that we have a restless Adversary who will be busie about us in our last hours, to disrest our Souls and shake that Faith which he can never make to fail. Besides that Doubtings may prevail at times, Grace being but weak and imperfect in the best of God's Children, and their assurances and comforts not always equal. Nay Grace it self inclines us to fear, both as it is the safe side, and most expressive of that Humiliation which becomes a Sinner. The Scripture always directs us to it; *that we be not high-minded but fear,*

fear, that having a Promise left us of entring into Rest we fear lest we seem to come short of it. And blessed is the man that feareth always. But the Hopes of the Righteous prevail above their Fears, and not only keep them from actual unbelief, distrust and despondency, but praying, waiting, wrestling and casting themselves upon Sovereign Grace and Mercy to save them.

Let this teach us neither to *judge* hardly of those who may die in darkness, after an exemplary and holy Walk with God; Nor yet to *sink* and give up our Hopes and reliance on the Merits and Mercies of our *Saviour* should it come to be our own Lot.

I have finish'd, in a brief and general manner, the *Meditations* I would at this time Offer on these serious and we'ity Heads which I have named from my *Text*: A dying hour is a very *Awful* time; We shall greatly need then the Testimony of our *Consciences* that we have walked before God in truth and with a perfect heart, and have aim'd to do those things that are pleasing in His sight; and happy the Person who can then make such an *Appeal* unto his *Judge* before whom he is going to appear: But never

ver the less there may be a strong *desire* of Life, and *fears* to Die, and *tears* at the Approach of Death, after a most upright Life, and amidst very comfortable Reflections thereon.

And now I need scarce tell you the *Occasion* of the present Meditations, or how much they answer unto the Upright Life and Lamented Death of the late Excellent GROVE HIRST Esq; whom we have followed with so much sorrow unto his *Grave* this last Week. I esteem him to have been *so bright an Example* in his Day of uncommon Piety, and an Extrordinary Walk with God, that I can't forbear commending him to the imitation of *Survivors*, and give Glory unto God who was pleas'd by His Grace to distinguish him among us.

My Knowledge of him began in *London*, where I had occasion to observe his *Vertue* and Modesty, and reverend Regards to Religion; but by a long and intimate Acquaintance with him since, that esteem and affection which began beyond Sea has grown into Endearment and Reverence; on the account of his conspicuous Goodness, Sanctity and Devotion.

He

He had a very *tender Conscience* from his Youth, and when the *Spirit* of God made His first *Effectual Impressions* on his tender Heart, he produced a very uncommon Brokenness, and such an abiding holy fear and mourning under the sense of Sin and deserv'd Wrath, as kept him *pale* for I think *Tears* together. His heart was as it were *smitten and withered like Grass*, so that he forgot to eat his Bread; and by reason of the voice of his Groaning, his Bones clave to his Skin. But he afterward tasted the Comforts and Joys of Religion, and has long since been a *cheerful Christian*.

From our first Assembling for the Worship of God in *this Place* he joyn'd himself to us, and has constantly adher'd to us, even after the Settlement of so Excellent a Brother as Mr. Sewall, in the Pastoral Office over a Neighbouring Congregation, which was the highest Testimony of his singular Regards to us; But more admirable yet it was in Mrs. *Hirst* to the Day of her Sickness and Death. And God made him a singular Ornament to this Church, and if our Ministry may have serv'd under the Blessing of the *Holy Spirit* to the Forming and for the perfecting of such a Saint, it is a Seal and a Reward for which

Free Grace is to be much acknowledged and adored. Much of our *Beauty* and *Spiritual Glory* is fallen in him, and our Honour laid in the dust ; which the *Father of Lights and the God of the Spirits of all Flesh* only can repair and restore.

He ever preserv'd and exhibited an awful Reverence of GOD, a mighty sense of the evil of Sin, and a dreadful Fear of the Divine Wrath : a firm perswasion of the Divine Truth, a fixt belief of the Doctrines of Revealed Religion, and a conscientious Regard unto the whole Law of God : a reverend sense of the Justice and Sovereignty of God, and a profound Submission to His holy Will.

He walk'd closely, evenly and steddily with God in *Secret*, and redeem'd much time to be alone : He spent his redeemed hours in these his Retirements, (as appears from his *Papers*, some few of which remain) in pious Meditation, Self-Examination, Reading and Writing ; and one would wonder where he found Time and Spirits for one half of what he did in this kind, after the diligent Labours wherein he spent his days : But he carefully sav'd his *Evenings*, and sometimes *Devoted a whole Day* to make his Humiliations and Supplications to his God ; and as
he

he had a wonderful facility in *Writing* and an uncommon Order and Easiness of *thinking*, and a readiness of *expressing* his mind pertinently, so he wrote down for his own Review, and to revive the impressions on his own mind, what pass'd between God and his own Soul. Nay in these his solemn hours of Retirement he sometimes wrote down for himself *Forms of Prayer* wherein to spread a particular case before God, which he happily drew up with a singular Pertinency and Solemnity, and then doubtless spread them before God, and on his knees pray'd them over with what further additional Supplications it pleased God to move him unto and assist him in.

He delighted much in *Reading*, and his *Bible* and Practical Treatises in *Divinity* were his profitable and pleasant Study, whereby the Work of Sanctification was greatly advanced in him from day to day. He collected a fine *Library* of such *Authors*, to the number of about Two Hundred Books, many of them in *Folio*, and few (if any) of them were there which he had not carefully read thro'. By this means he made great Attainments in *Knowledge*, as well as in *true Goodness*; and those words of the gracious *Psalmist* might be

be applied to him; Psal. 119. 97, 98. *O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day: thou thro' thy Commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me: I have more understanding than all my Teachers, for thy Testimonies are my meditation.*

He was very strict and exact in the Sanctification of the *Lord's-Day*, and in his Preparations for the *Holy Table of Christ*; but withal so tender and scrup'lous and jealous over himself with a Godly fear and jealousy, that sometimes when he had been *most solemn* in his Preparations, yet his fears *restrain'd* him from partaking of the Childrens Bread. This was his *Infirmity*, and he is not to be imitated in it: but yet it were much to be wish'd that the Error of *Professors* in this Age were rather on this side, an over-strict and not a too *lax* regard to the Sacred Institutions of our Saviour.

How *grave* and serious he was in the *Publick* Worship of God's House, and what a *Lover* of it, we are all Witnesses: *Alas*, that we are to see his grave and *gracious Face* no more among us in these Holy Duties! But the *private* Worship of his House was also very constant and *Solemn*. The Order and
Government

Government of his *Family* was very strict and exact, yet manag'd with a mild and gentle hand. His *Children* were in Subjection with all Gravity, yet under the mildest and softest Rein. Great were the Pains he took with them, in instructing them and watching over them, praying for them, admonishing, charging, reproving, and encouraging them as there was occasion. For *them* he earnestly desir'd to live, if it had been the Will of God, and to His Covenant Mercy he chearfully and solemnly committed them: and we trust that his fervent Prayers and Blessings will come upon the dear *Orphans*, and the gracious Spirit that was in *their Parents* rest upon them. He was also a wise and careful Master to his *Servants*, and very solicitous for their Spiritual Good, and happy was it for *some* that ever they came under his Roof, and *all* that did so owe much to God for the Example of bright Piety and Goodness which they had in him, and the Means they had there for their Eternal advantage.

He was a good *Neighbour*, and a singular *Friend* on the best Principles, scil, those of Vertue and strict Godliness: For as he hated Vice in others and would not sit with the wicked,

wicked, so he was a *lover of Good Men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful Word*. He was pleasant in Conversation, hearty and cordial, obliging and ready to serve his Friend: sincere in his esteem of others, free in declaring it in their absence, but very cautious (as I have observ'd with pleasure) of saying any thing to their faces that might look like flattery.

He was a Person of great *Industry and Diligence*; whom no Man could tax with Idleness or want of Application to his proper Business; whether it were in his *Store-house*, or in his *Publick Trusts*, or in his *Family Cares and Duties*. Let the *Town* say what his Cares of the *Poor* were, of whom for divers Years, he was chosen an *Overseer*; and a very faithful and laborious One he was, bestowing a great portion of his time and tho'ts on them and for them; tender of the *Vertuous* among them, severe to the *Vicious*, with whom also (to my knowlege) he privately took pains to convince them of their sin and folly, and recover them from the Error of their ways. He was indeed a *declared Enemy of Vice and Immorality*, and when he was nam'd for and put into the *Commission for the Peace*, (an Honour which very much surpriz'd

priz'd him, being altogether unso't by him and unexpected) this was the Great Reason that prevail'd with him to take the *Oath*, as his private *Papers* declare, the Power that Providence put into his hand for the suppressing open Wickedness and Prophaness. And immediately therefore he applied himself to get knowlege in the *Law* ; and he suddenly made some good Proficiency in it ; for he conscientiously bent his mind to it as his duty, made diligent Enquiries of some that were *Learned* ; and being naturally inclined and long since habited to Study, read and note down what he thought and read, and having a Capacity to take things readily, and a faculty to draw up with great Easiness and Propriety ; he came little behind (if any thing at all) those that have the advantages of a *Liberal Education*. Such is the power of a good Inclination to get knowlege, a Capacity to receive it, and a conscientious Endeavour after it, where the Advantage of humane Learning is wanting. Had Mr. *Hirst* had an *Accademical Education*, attended with his inclinations to Diligence and Labour for the acquiring of profitable Knowlege to serve his God and his Generation with it, he would have been a *burning and*

a shining Light indeed in whatever Order Providence had assigned him. And so indeed he was in his Place.

But it was his conspicuous *Probity, Honesty, Sincerity, Justice and Fidelity*, that honoured and endear'd Mr. *Hirst* to the Town. Therefore when he was the Person nam'd by the Government out of *this Church* to take care for the faithful Distribution of the *Charity* collected after the late *Great Fire*, I well remember the Satisfaction which every body express'd in that Wise Appointment. And when afterward he was nam'd for the *Commission of the Peace* there was a like general Satisfaction in it. Such a Testimony he had for his Integrity in the Hearts of all that knew him well. The Publick Respects fo't and follow'd him ; and Honour will ordinarily follow Goodness and Humility as a shadow does the Body which seems to go from it. At times he was afraid (as he Writes) that he felt himself *Elated and carnally pleas'd* ; but (adds he) " I desire with
" my Soul to abhor my self for it, to suppress these motions of Pride, and to mourn
" before God in the sense of it.

He

He was blest'd with a *generous and publick Spirit to do Good*. He was given to *Hospitality* at home. His *Charities* were many abroad, and not seldom very great; which sometimes came to my Knowledge from one and another of my *poorer Brethren in the Ministry*. The Poor of *Salem* and *Boston* have lost a bountiful and merciful Benefactor. (*Salem* had the honour of his Birth and Education, *Boston* of his Life and Grave.) As God prosper'd him in his Worldly Estate, so he laid by and laid out in Pious Uses: As Riches increas'd, so he was *rich in good Works*, and *ready to distribute*. His *Prayers* which were many, did not go up without *Alms* before God.

He was a sincere Lover of his *Country* and of these *Churches*. The Religious and Civil Liberties of it were dear to him. He mourn'd in secret for the Sins of the Times and Places wherein he liv'd, and he rejoyc'd in all that is Good among us, and in every gracious Care of God for the *Publick*.

He was a careful *Observer* of Providence governing every *private Affair* of his own, and he carried his Concerns to God with suitable Supplications, Humiliations and Resignations; as his private *Papers* do abundantly

G

dantly testify. And where he was faulted or tho't hardly of by others, he had there noted down the *Reasons* of his Conduct for his own Remembrance and Comfort. So strict and exact, circumspect and watchful, diligent and fruitful was his holy Walk before God. *Herein he exercised himself always to keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man.* And yet his *Temptations* were many, his *Fears* very great and often returning upon him, his *Darknesses* very distressing, frequent and in great Degrees; the advantage which the Tempter took (as I judge) of his natural Temper and Infirmary; and the Trial which the wise GOD saw needful and ordained to his own Glory. For while Mr. *Hirst* sometimes could see *nothing* of the Grace of God in himself, every body about him saw it *bright* and conspicuous.

One would have thought indeed that a Life so holy would have been always bright; and the *End* of it tranquillity and peace, serenity and joy. But as he liv'd most lowly and abased before God, and ever fearing the worst of himself, so he met his Death.

He was apprehensive from the first that it was his dying Sickness, and set himself to *think seriously of appearing before his Judge;*

as his manner was thro' his whole Regenerate Life upon every *Sickness* prevailing in the Town. As the ill Symptoms increas'd *he set his House in Order*; which he did with that Wisdom and Justice and Goodness which had adorn'd his Life.

[The Circumstance of his Family was now a *dark Cloud* upon him: He had *Five Small Children* to leave behind him, their Excellent *Mother* being dead above a Year before. These hung about his tender Soul, which earnestly embrac'd them, and he hop'd (with Submission to the Divine Will) to have been spar'd to them. But in this hard conflict with flesh and blood Grace got and kept the Victory: for he often *resign'd* them and himself to a gracious and faithful GOD, and particularly in the Hour of his Death (as I am told) repeated that glorious *Act*, Praying *that God would put His Fear in their hearts that they might never depart from Him, and that He would never turn away from them to do them Good*: Adding, *In this Covenant is all my Salvation, and all my Desire*. He then also call'd for, charg'd and bless'd his *Eldest Daughter*; and spake honourably of his *House-keeper* for her Vertue, Prudence and

Fidelity in her Care of his Family, and commended her to the Grace and Favour of God.]

On the Day before his Death, being the *Lords-Day*, he summ'd up his Request to God in these *Three Petitions* : 1. That God would of His Infinite Mercy in *Christ* pardon his Sin, and that he might obtain Justification thro' His Righteousness imputed to him, and by him laid hold upon in the Exercise of Faith. 2. That his Life might be yet given him at his Petition. 3. That he might be made meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. But he added this glorious Word and Act of Submission ; *Now Father, not as I will but as thou wilt.*

Yet his *Fears* returned and continued, while it appear'd to him and all about him, that he was actually a *dying*. Never the less his *Prayers* were fervent, and his *Faith* and *Hope* were vigorous and lively in the midst of his Fears. For when he could utter but one short Word in two or three Breaths I left him Praying, — “*That he might be presented before the Throne of the Lamb without spot or wrinkle, and come to sing the new Song, &c.* And afterward, as I am inform'd by a religious Neighbour, he utter'd many comfortable Words.

Words. "I die in hope, said he, tho' it be Hope against hope, — Lord, said he, Suffer not the Devils to insult me in this hour, but cause them to gnash with their teeth and melt away. — My whole Expectation is from Christ. — If I must not dye in Triumph, Lord let me dye with Comfort. — Lord take away my filthy Garments, and clothe me with change of Raiment. — Let me joyn the Innumerable Company of Angels — — — &c. In such holy Breathings and broken Fervours of Devotion he breath'd out his Heavenly Spirit, and after all his Fears made a Glorious Exit.

To Conclude, I have drawn my Account of this Good Man unto this Length, to do some Honour unto Exemplary Piety, (for the Memory of the Just is Blessed) and also to excite the Emulation and Imitation of all that hear me this Day: (yea of all into whose hands this Discourse may come:) that imploring the Grace of GOD they may in His Strength set themselves to be such, (and as much more as they please) in their Places, to the Honour of GOD, and the Good of the World.

Whatsoever things I have related of him that are honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report ;
if

if there be any Vertue, if there be any Praise, think of these things. Those things which you have now heard, or whatever more some of You may have seen and known in Him, do : And the GOD of Peace shall be with you.

And this I Pray, that your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge and in all Judgment ; That ye may approve things that are Excellent ; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the Day of CHRIST : Being filled with the fruits of Righteousness, which are by JESUS CHRIST unto the Glory and Praise of GOD.

to the Honour of GOD, and the Good of the World.

Whatsoever things I have related of this that are good, just, honest, and of good report ;

*to excite the Imagination and Attention of all that hear me this Day : (yet of all into whose hands this Epistle may come) that im-
ploring the Grace of GOD they may in His strength be themselves to be wise ; (and as much excites their hearts) in their Places, to the Honour of GOD, and the Good of the World.*

A Walk with G O D,

Exhibited in a few

Select Instances

Gathered from the *Remains* of the

Private Writings

OF

Grove Hirst Esq;

Merchant in **Boston** in

New-England.

HAVING in the foregoing *Discourse* given something of Mr. *Hirsts* just Character, I shall now justify all that I have said, and perfect the Character out of *his own Writings*.

His

His *Papers* were in Abundance, which he *order'd* to be *burnt*, one *Book* excepted, which is little more than half wrote through, and much of that in *Characters*, and many parts of what is *legible* is of *private Matters* which ought not to be made Publick. And I very much suspect that *this Book* had not been spar'd, if there had not been in it here and there some *Accounts* for his own *Justification* in things wherein others had judg'd and condemn'd him. For I find him very tender in *three points* among many others, scil. the settling his own *Conscience*, the vindicating his own *Reputation*, and the being just and *faithful* to them that intrusted their *Estates* in his Hands as a *Factor*.

The *Instances* I shall now produce are so many incontestible *proofs* of his carrying every Concern of his Life to God in *Prayer*; and how well he did it let the serious and intelligent *Readers* judge. I trust they will be Entertaining and Edifying to *such*, and the more because that they are in points of *General Use* and common Benefit, affording so many bright *Rules of Christian Conduct* in some of the greatest and most *Important Articles of Humane Life*.

These

These Examples are of various kinds, which I have dispos'd in the following Order, 1. Some of his *Sabbath Meditations and Devotions*. 2. *Sacramental Preparations and Reflections*. 3. His Eying the *Divine Providence* in the Government of *his own private Affairs*. To which I add, 4. A Caution which he entred to himself *against Carefulness*. 5. His religious Notice and Improvement of some *Publick Occurrences* in the Providence of God, particularly God's Mercy to the *Town* in preserving it from that Mortal Sickneſs the *Small Pocks*, when once and again in eminent hazard. This much affected him, in proportion to his Fears of that *Distemper*, and his Concern for his *Family*, and for the Children of the *Town*; whereof from *Fifteen Years* and under none now have had it. 6. I have transcrib'd a clause or two of what he wrote on his *Birch-Day* in its Annual return. And in like manner, 7. On a *New-Years-Day*. 8. On his being nam'd for, and accepting of the *Commission for the Peace*. 9. On his *Wifes Death*. 10. A Solemn Act of *Self-Dedication* which he made or repeated upon that *Be-reavement*. 11. On the Death of his *Mother*. 12. On a supposal of his *Marrying again*. And lastly. A *Letter to his Eldest Daughter* a little before his own Death. H These

These are the *Particulars* whereof the following Sheets consist, and the *Six Last* Instances bear date within the *two last Years* of his Life.

In some of *these* the Reader will find the *Darknesses* of this *Good Man* to prevail strangely over him; and if *this* should be a Temptation to any to *despise* Religion or to *fear* it; I am ready to own to them that there might be much *Infirmity* in it, and it may be some want of those clear Apprehensions and that right Judgment, which would have yielded unto *Stronger Minds* many Grounds of Comfort from much *inferior* Measures and Exercises of Grace. I fear also that *my Gracious Friend* might seek and place the Exercise of Devotion too much in the *passionate part* of it, and consequently his comfort in the flowing of his *Affections* in holy Duties. Whereas had he made his *Even Course of Obedience* to the Laws of God, his *Pure Aims* at the pleasing and honouring Him in all his Actions, which is to say his *Steady and Close Walk before God in Truth*, more his *Rule* in his daily severe *Self Reflections*, I am perswaded his *Darknesses* had not been so many. In saying which I would not be tho't to mean any dislike

like of *Flame and Affection* in Exercises of Religion: No, they are very much the *Life, Beauty* and *Joy* of them; very *honorary* to God as well as exceeding *Profitable* and *Comfortable* to a Mans own Soul. Never the less they are by no means the *principal* Ground or Reason of a Christians *Comfort* in his judging of his own *Spiritual State*; and I fear too many sincere and fervent Christians hurt their own *Peace* by going too far into *this* Rule of Trial. But at the same time I chose not wholly to *omit* the Passages in Mr. *Hirsts* Papers which speak his darkneses and fears, temptations and distresses about his *Spiritual State*, even sometimes after his most solemn *Enquiries* thereinto *with strong crying and tears to God*; because I judge they may be of Service to many like *tender Consciences*, and fearing *scrupulous* sincere Christians, who tho' they should not be *Countenanc'd* in their Infirmary, yet need to be *upheld from sinking* under it; and it may be it may help not only to do *that*, but also to *deliver* them from this *Spirit of Bondage* when they observe that *Others* who have been *Eminently Godly* have suffer'd by it before them. I Pray therefore that any thing of this Nature in the following *Papers* which

is of Weakness and Infirmary may not be drawn into Example; but let the serious *Reader* observe, admire and venerate the Spirit of *high Sanctity* and Reverend regards to the Purity and Justice of GOD, which shine forth in this *awful Darkeness*: if I may be allow'd to speak so of it.

I shall not detain the *Reader* any longer from the *Entertainment* provided for him in the following *Pages*; in the transcribing whereof tho' I have taken the Liberty to make many *Omissions* of Passages more proper for a private *Manuscript*, (which are usually mark'd thus ——— and do sometimes break the *Style* and the *Connexion* of Tho't) yet I seldom found any reason to alter a *Word* or a *Phrase*, his expressions being natural and sufficiently accurate.

May it please the *Divine Spirit of Grace* to accompany these *dear Remains* of his *Servant* with His efficacious *Blessing* unto the *Readers* Soul, that they may be to Him if he be already *Converted* as the *Mantle of Elijah* which fell from him as he ascended, and a *double Portion* of his Spirit rested on Him that took it up; or if he be one yet *dead in sin* that they may be to him as the *Ashes of Elisba* was to the *dead Body* which was cast into his *Grave*, & it revived and stood on its feet.

Mr.

Mr. HIRST's *Remains.*

I shall begin with some of his Sabbath Meditations, whereby he was wont to Excite himself unto the Sanctification of that Holy Day.

On a LORDS-Day Morning before Day-Light.

I find my self much *out of frame* for this *holy Time*, and the holy Duties of the *Day*. My sense of Spiritual and Eternal things does much abate. The *Holy Spirit* of GOD doth greatly withdraw. I am eaten up with Worldly Cares and Concerns. I am sunk into the Earth. I grovel in Mire and Dirt. I cannot *savour the things that are of GOD*. The relish which sometimes I have experienc'd in holy Duties is gone. The Delight I have had in *Sabbaths* is vanish'd. The contempt also which I have sometimes had of this World. I am in danger of being *Entangled again & Overcome*. The *Earth* with its *Barrs* encompasses my Soul. How sottish and stupid am I grown? Rouse up, O my Soul, and say—Dost thou believe that there is a *GOD* and a *Judgment*? — Why then
art

art thou thus besotted? *glu'd* to the World, inflav'd by thy Lufts, captivated by sense, as if thou wert always to remain here? Why so concern'd about Temporal things? Why so *careful* and tho'tful about Events in particular Cases? Why dost thou suffer thy self to be eaten up with Worldly cares and fears, to the discomposing thy Spirits? disturbing thy Mind, unfitting thee for the duties of Religion? Alas, *why indeed?* but because of a depraved, viciated Nature, *a Body of sin* that hangs about me, continually dogging and worrying me, from which I can no ways deliver my self, nor can any meer *Created Being* deliver me. It is beyond the power of *rational Arguments*. I am sensible of the folly and madness of it, but this avails not. If the *Holy Spirit* withdraws, if Grace be suspended, what force is there in bare Reason? What can an enlightened Mind do of it *self*? The Work is *GOD's*: On *thy* Mercy I hope, on *thy* Power I rest, on *thy* Name I call: O let me experience that there is *plenteous Redemption with thee*, that thy Grace is Omnipotent, and that *thou takest pleasure in them that fear thee and hope in thy Mercy*. O Lord, Stretch forth thy right Hand, revive thy Work in my Soul, strengthen that which
remains

remains and is ready to die, make bare thy holy Arm and shew me thy Salvation, for the sake of the *Lord Jesus Christ*. Amen.

On a *Lords-Day Evening*.

This Day I have been in a very *dead and heartless* frame. — I am dark and dull and lifeless! No sense of Sin, or the Love of God, unaffected with the Death of *Christ*! I have a heart as *hard as a stone*! Lord open my Eyes, *soften* my Heart, quicken me for thy Mercy sake.

II.

What always *rooting* in the *Earth*, enslav'd to sense, captivated by Lust, and in *Bondage to Corruption*? is this to play the part of a *rational Creature*, much less a *Christian*; which Honourable *Name* tho' inscrib'd on me, yet alas how little do I comply with its Demands? — Am I only *Earth*? Am I meerly a small lump of flesh? have I not an *Immortal Soul* within? the *Breath of the Almighty* which renders me capable of Operations and Enjoyments superior to the Attainments of *Beasts*, that must be govern'd by bit and bridle, and which neither do or shall know any greater happiness than the satisfaction

satisfaction of sense ! What *Weight* is it that bears me down and sinks me thus *below my self*? — How is it that I am carried away with the *mean* proposals of profit, pleasure and present Enjoyments ? How comes it about that they appear so trim and gay, and that I am so allur'd and bewitch'd by *Vanity and Emptiness* ? Am I to remain here *always*, that I am thus captivated by a vain World ?

No, I know my *Time* is short and very uncertain, I believe that I must ere long follow my *Fathers*, — and appear before *GOD*, the strict impartial *Judge*, to receive a Reward according to my present conduct. How is it then that I am so little affected herewith ? that I am not swallow'd up in a constant pondering these things in my Mind ? Alas, whither am I *sunk* ? what madness and frenzie seizes me ? that I am from day to day groaning under Evils that I *feel*, concern'd about such as I *fear* ; have my mind taken up to get deliverance from *this*, and to prevent *that* ; hugging my self in Worldly Acquisitions and the esteem of Men, and pleas'd in the prospect of their increase ? and yet all the while convinc'd that this *Variety of Providence* is but for a Moment,

Moment, and can make me neither happy nor wretched. Why then do I suffer myself to be thus imposed on? why do I befooled and deceive myself, as tho' I were destitute of Grace and Understanding together?—My sins have stupified me, my lusts blind me,—and nothing weaker than *Omnipotence* can deliver me from this wretched Condition. I was *born blind*: Now it was *never heard since the World began that any man opened the Eyes* of such a one:—but *HE* who once did it has left upon Record that *Miraculous Act* that we might have hope. He is *God and Man* in two Natures, —and is the *Physician* not of the *Body* only, but more eminently of the *Soul*; and can *open the eyes of our Understandings* to discern Spiritual things, and to *know Him that is True*. His *Spirit* it is who by Office is appointed to open the blind Eyes, to turn Sinners from *darkness to light*; to illuminate, sanctifie and cleanse the Heart, and prepare it to be a *Temple* for Himself. This Grace and Privilege *Christ* has purchased, that the Lord GOD should dwell among us; that *the Tabernacle of GOD should be with Men, and that God should be their God*.

Let then this Favour be bestowed upon
I me:

me : *Awake, Awake O Arm of the LORD !* Shew me my wretched Condition, fill me with groans after deliverance, help me to loose my self from my Bands, and do *Thou lead Captivity Captive.* Deliver me from Unbelief, disengage my Affections from the World, let *my Conversation be without Covetousness,* and without *Carefulness,* cause *all things to work together for my Good,* give me Submission to thy Will, pass before me in every Providence in and thro' the *New Covenant,* and let all thy Dealings with me be subservient to thy Glory, and my truest Happiness. Let it be my great Concern to have *Treasure in Heaven,* and grant that I may be *laying up in store a good Foundation against the Time to come ; that so I may lay hold upon Eternal Life.* Amen.

In the next place I shall add some few Sacramental Meditations, Preparations for and Reflections after the Communion of the Lords-Supper.

The Day before his Coming to the
LORD's-Table.

THIS Day I spent in Secret to humble my self before GOD, to confess my Sins and
and

and to implore the Divine Favour. I joyned *Fasting to Prayer*, my particular Design being to prepare for the *Lords-Table* to Morrow.

I have been very *cold and dead*, unable to realize Spiritual things as I *ought*, as I *desire*. Lord, *why bidest thou thy face, why withdraw-est thou thy self?* The Lord is *righteous* for I have sinned, and all my coldness in Devotion is long of my self. My Sins they are that *separate* between God and my Soul, and that *with-hold* good things from me. I *have sinned, what shall I say unto thee O thou Preserver of Men!* My iniquities *prevail* against me, but do thou *purge* them away. Triumph in the *Sovereignty* and Power of thy Grace toward me. Lord, withdraw not thy Self, nor leave me to strive in my own strength, but display thy Power in my Weakness.

I am now about to approach the *Memorial of the Death of Christ*, and that I may not come to that *Sacred Institution* in a careless tho'tless manner, I have sequestred my self to day to seek thy Aids and the Influences of thy *Spirit*, and being just at the *close* of the Day, on a review of the *Frame* of my Heart, I am much *discouraged*. — I can't meditate nor pray with that life and

fixedness that I would. This much dispirits me, and I am at a great stand as to both my *State* and my *Duty* of attending the Lords-Supper. Well, what must I *absent* my self from time to time, because of my sins and falls? because of my lusts and corruptions, for want of life and activity? When as it is the express Command of Christ, DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME! Will not *this* be to add Sin to Sin? A *fresh Omission* can never atone for past Sins: It certainly contracts *new Guilt*. Absence from this Ordinance is both a Violation of the *Command* of Christ, and a Neglect of one *Means* appointed to mortify Lust, to quicken Grace, and recover languid Spirits. And what hath in its own Nature, a greater tendency to work in us hatred of and repentance for Sin, than a sight of the *Justice* of God displayed against it? which finding His SON standing in the Sinners stead spared him not, nor was it satisfied until that He was made a Sacrifice? Now is it not a rational Inference from hence, that — *there is a bloody Guilt in Sin?* — and if *this* hath not a Tendency to work in the Soul an Abhorrence and Fear of it, I know not what hath. Again what is more likely to draw forth Faith

Faith in and Love to *Christ*, or to work in us Meekness, Patience, Resignation, Forbearance; Forgiveness of Injuries, or any and every Grace, than to have a lively Representation of all these *Graces* in all Perfection in *Christ*? Here we have exhibited His *Submission to His Father*, for He laid down His Life of Himself; *His Love to Man*; whom He Died to Redeem; *His Patience*, for He went as a *Lamb to the Slaughter*; *His Forbearance*, who when He was reviled He reviled not again; *His Forgiveness of Enemies*, *Father forgive them they know not what they do.* — Moreover, the Ordinance being of Divine Appointment and a special Commandment, I desire humbly to be waiting at the Posts of *Wisdoms Doors*, mourning after *Christ*, lamenting my flatness, dulness, stupidity; and waiting for the Returns of His Favour, and the Breathings of His Spirit.

The Sabbath Evening.

Well now I am return'd from this *Holy Feast*; But hath it been indeed a *Feast* to me? No, my Coldness and Indisposition remains. I have not been affected with my Sins, or with the Love of Christ. The *Win-*

ter

ter still remains, my Senses are chill'd and numb'd, and I have no relish of this Provision. *What ails my languid feeble Soul?* It moves not, it will not stir, it cannot raise it self to the Contemplation of Spiritual Objects ; it *savours not the things of God.*

Lord, thou art *Holy*, — thy Grace is *free*, I have forfeited it, — But can I be content without it ? am I easie and quiet in this Condition ? *No Lord*, I wait for thee, I *thirst for God, for the living God.* I Pray thee separate between me and my Sins, and let not them separate between thee and my Soul. Fulfil thy *Promise* to me, of pouring *Water upon the dry Ground*, and causing Floods to break forth in the Desert. *Awake O Arm of the Lord* and put on Strength, and awaken my sleepy secure Soul, rouse me out of my *Lethargy*, give power to the *faint*, and to him that hath no might increase strength ; quicken me after thy Loving kindness. *Entreat me not to leave thee, nor from following after thee,* — but let my Soul follow hard after thee, let thy right hand uphold me, and 'ere I am aware let me be as the *Chariots of Amminidab.*

At

At another time in his *Preparations* for
the *Lord's-Table*.

I am Invited on the *Morrow* to a Feast of fat things, to eat and drink with Christ, yea to feed on Christ at His Table. The Bread and Wine are preparing, the Vessels and Linnen are cleansed, and all things are ready. The Table is furnished and whosoever is Athirst may come. Yea whosoever will may come and take of the Water of Life freely. But the *King* is present with the Guests, and knows the Principle that inclines them to come, and their Frames in their Attendance, and will either smile or frown on them as they are upright or false to Him. In this tho't I have retir'd the *After-part* of this day, to Examine my heart, and to prepare for the Approaching Solemnity. And while I look into my self and call to mind my many and great Transgressions, my Falls and Miscarriages since the *last Sacrament*, together with the power of indwelling Sin, my spirits sink, my heart fails me, my iniquities are a heavy burthen to me; I am ashamed, yea even confounded; for our GOD is *Holy*, and who can serve such a *Holy LORD* GOD? Who can, who dares do otherwise?

We

We are not left at Liberty : Necessity is laid upon us, and wo unto us if we neglect His Service. He knows our frame and requires not Absolute Perfection. If we are sincere we shall be accepted altho' our Services are defective. But the Remembrance of my Sins, the proness in me to transgress, my repeated slips and falls, the motions of Sin which I daily feel to bring forth fruits unto death, strikes a damp on my Soul, so that I am not able to look up. *I think on God and am troubled.* I cannot fix my tho'ts, I can't plead and wrestle with God in Prayer, I have no heart or spirit in Duty : And now shall I in this frame present my self to *this Holy Ordinance* ? Will God accept me ? May I not expect that He should say to me with an Air of Anger, — *How camest thou in hither ?* Lord, I tremble at thy Rebukes, and if thou shouldest mark iniquity who could stand ? But is it not thy *positive Command* that we should *remember the Death of Christ* ? and be *shewing it forth* in His Appointment ? Are not *all* thy Ordinances Holy ? and how dare I to attend *Prayer* or *Hearing* any more than this ? Is not the Character of *Holiness* upon one and other ? — I will go in Obedience to thy Command : *I will follow thee thou*

in the dark : I will seek *Him* whom my Soul desires to love : O hide not thy self from me : Say, *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me ? I will be his God.* Prepare my heart to seek thee ; graciously manifest thy self to me, speak to me good Words and comfortable. And let me be prepared by this and every Ordinance for every Change, especially for my last, that when Death comes I may have a well grounded hope of Eternal Life by *Jesus Christ*, and for His sake. *Amen.*

The next thing I would present the Reader with is his devout and religious Eying the Divine Governing Providence on particular Occasions : And 1. In his own more private Concerns.

IN many Particulars I have been lately cover'd with *Clouds*, but GOD has scatter'd 'em. I record *them* that He may have the *Glory*, and that on a *Review* hereof I may be excited to *Thankfulness*, and be strengthened to *trust* in Him at all times. — Great were my *Fears* & many the *Tho'ts* of my heart, but God has prevented me with His *Favour*. —

I had also an *Affair* of considerable Value in Dispute with a *Person*, but it is bro't quietly to an *Issue*. O that I could render to the Lord the Glory due to His Name by *living* thankfully and fruitfully before him, and by *Encouraging* my self in Him under all dark Providences.

— Under *Evils* fear'd and felt, I have made my *Supplications* to GOD, who alone could help and deliver me. And now God hath graciously *answer'd* me——— *What shall I render to Him for all His Benefits ?* I look on my self in these Circumstances upon my *Trial*. Here's Temptation in the case. GOD observes how I carry it ; with what heart and frame I receive his Favours, and what Improvement I make of them. — I find that I am very much *pleas'd* with these *Smiles* of Providence, and too apt to be taken with them. But what *reason* have I for it ? Is it as looking upon them to be an *Answer of Prayer*, or from any good ground to hope that they are sent as a *Token of God's Love* ? or is it because my present Circumstances are somewhat easier, & that I have a more full supply of Temporal Enjoyments ? — I can't say but that I am too much pleas'd in a carnal manner ; but my Desire is (I hope in sincerity)
to

to be sensible of the Goodness of God, and of the Obligations which he lays me under of *Devotedness* to him and of trusting in him; and I wait upon him for Grace to imploy the *Bounties* of his Providence in his Service. I Sacrifice not to my *own net and drag*, I have not *room* for it; the Favours are such as I did not *foresee*, nor could I *expect*: *It is the Lords doing and Wonderful*: Unto Him I give the Glory of it.

But as all outward Favours, so all *Spiritual Mercies* are from him. If God should multiply Silver as the Dust, and yet should leave me under the darkness of my Nature I should be insensible of my *Benefactor*; or if I should have only common Illumination I should after all remain Unthankful. If He does not give me a heart I shall never allow my self the *Use* of what I have given me; but in the fulness of my sufficiency should remain in straits; and by consequence my Hands would be *clos'd* and never opened to the relief of others.

Therefore I look up unto Thee, the Author of every good Gift, for a heart to make a free, chearful and temperate Use of what thou bestowest on me, for my more delightful discharge of Duty; and together herewith

for a liberal Spirit to study liberal Things, to do good and to Communicate to the necessities of others; remembering that I am but a Steward intrusted with these Favours, for which I must give an Account. And as an Encouragement herein help me to consider, that altho' they are thy *Propriety* and only *lent* me, or put into my hands to Administer, agreeably to thy Directions, yet that if I am faithful in the Management I shall according to the Grace of the *New Covenant* receive a most Glorious Reward. Lord, bestow on me a thankful heart, and by these *Streams* let me be conducted to the *Fountain* of Goodness. *With thee is the Fountain of Life, in thy Light it is that I see Light; stretch forth thy loving kindness to me, and make me upright in heart.*

II.

Decemb. 19. 1713. Several of my *Family* have been visited with the *Measles*, and are all restored to Health: But the whole of this time hath been a Season of much Trouble, &c—. I desire with thankfulness to own the Mercies under our Troubles which we have been encompass'd with.

I. That none of my Family have been in hazardous Circumstances, but a great deal

deal of Moderation in the Chastning,——

2. We in this time of Cold and Scarcity of Bread, have had a defence against the former and a full supply of the latter,——

3. In this time of greater Expence God hath graciously sent in Two Ships from *London*, in which I had a considerable Interest and an Employment, both beyond my Expectation; by which I am enabled with more chearfulness to defray my own Charges and to be helpful to others.

III.

God has been pleas'd to *Smile* upon me in his Providences of late, sending in a considerable part of my Substance, &c——. But I find my Affections too much taken with these things, I find my self foolishly pleas'd with these Trifles, —— I find my Desires too eager after the World, my Hopes and Fears too much exercis'd about present things, and by being daily employ'd in these Affairs I am insensibly grown insensible. ——

Lord deliver me from the spirit of this World, from sinful Sollicitude, from carnal Hopes and Fears: And help me to use the World as not abusing it, to trust in and refer all my concerns to thee, to be careful for Nothing, to attend my Particular Calling with an Eye to my

my *General* ; to follow my *Secular Affairs* from a religious Principle, to improve every *Change* in preparation for my *Last*, and *wherein I am Called to Abide with God.*

IV.

Various have been the Dispensations of God to me of late. In some instances my Affairs have had a dark Aspect, but since the Smiles of Providence have been considerable, But what thanks do I return to God ? what fruit is there of these *Favours* ? what effect have they upon me ? how are they improved ? If I rejoyce in any outward Good only as it is a gratification of sense, I am no better than a *Beast*. If I employ the Bounties of Heaven in the service of my *Lusts*, — or if I improve them to *oppress* others, God will search this out and punish it. If I rejoyce because my hand hath gotten Riches, and *make Gold my Hope and Confidence*, I make *Mammon* my God. — If I set my heart on these Trifles and hazard my Soul to *procure* and *preserve* them, I shall act very foolishly. But if I lose my Soul for *either*, I can have no Recompence ; the World and the *fulness* thereof is too *mean and vile* to repair the damage. Again on the other hand, if under *Afflictions* I sink, and it is only the flesh

flesh that cries out, it is no more than a *Beast* would do. The *Ox* lowes when he wants Fodder, and the *Ass* brays when there is no Food. If I am stupid and insensible under Chastnings, I am worse than a *Beast*, I am a *Stock* and a *Stone*. If I am mad and angry, if I chafe and frett and rage, this is to be a *Devil Incarnate*; they blaspheme God the Author of their Plagues. See to it then, O my Soul, that thou be not foolishly Elated with *Prosperity*, nor sunk with *Adversity*. Be jealous of thy self. Remember that thou art upon thy *Trial* in every State and Circumstance. And let it be thy great concern that in every Dispensation thou mayest know thy Duty and Interest, and be drawn or driven to *Christ*. Serve the LORD with gladness under his Smiles, and Consecrate thy Gain and Substance to the God of the whole Earth. Submit to him with Patience under his Chastnings, and plead with him that the fruit of all may be to take away thy Sins: And having obtained this *Spirit* and *Temper* from GOD, then thou mayst, yea thou wilt say, *Let the Lord do what seemeth him good.*

V.

This Day sundry *Vessels* arrived from Great
Bri-

Britain, in which I am very considerably Interested, partly on my *own* Account, and by *Commission* beyond my Expectation. I find in every state and change my way is laid with *Snares*, and I am beset with Temptations on every hand. The Lord grant that I may be on my *Watch*, that I may prosecute my *Secular* Affairs from a right *Principle*, and to a right *End*. Help me against a guilty *Thoughtfulness*, and enable me that *whatever I would that Men should do unto me, I may do so unto them*. Let me not be entangled by the World and neglect the *One* thing necessary. Help me to remember that in the midst of my *Life* I am in *Death*, and that of every *Talent* and Betrustment I must give an Account unto *Him that will Judge the quick and the dead*.

To this I add a Caution which he enter'd to himself against Carefulness: for we may perceive by his Papers that he found this Sin easily besetting him, which he therefore doubled his Guard against.

Against Carefulness.

BE Careful for Nothing. — This is the Command. It's positive and gracious.
And

And while God asserts his *Authority* he consults our *Peace* and *welfare* in it. So that the *Obligation* is enforc'd by a *double Argument*. And one would think that since our *Tranquillity* is so much consulted in this *Injunction*, we shou'd not need any other *Motive* to put it into practice. But *all* will not do. It is a difficult thing for a *Person* to engage in an *Affair* and then to *refer the Event* to God.

I have fundry *Persons* much *Indebted* to me whose *Circumstances* are doubtful. Their long *delays* in paying not only does much prejudice me, but hampers my mind and dops my tho'ts, — and leaves me not in *holy Exercises*, — fills my *head* with *Cares* and my *Heart* with *Sorrow*. — The *Lord* shew me the *Sin* that is in this unprofitable *Sollicitude*, and let *thy Spirit* accompany my *Meditations*, sanctifying them to my *Deliverance* from this *guilty and unprofitable temper* of *Soul*.

1. It is a *Breach* upon *GOD's Command*. He has prohibited this *Anxiety* of mind. And is it nothing to transgress that *Law*? — is there not a punishment assign'd to every *Transgression* and *Disobedience*? and shall I dare to provoke him? shall I contend with

L

my

my *Maker*? dispute his Authority? and expose my self to his *Revenge*?

2. It is *base Ingratitude*. An ill *Requital* of God for Favours receiv'd. Does he not feed and clothe me? and who but he has upheld and preserv'd me from the Womb to this day? By his Care I am continued, and from his Bounty I am supplied. When I have been in trouble I have call'd upon him, and he has heard me and granted deliverance. — Hath he not exalted and lift me up? and shall I now ungratefully distrust him? No, let this Spirit be far from me. — *They that know thy Name will trust in thee.*

3. It is very *Unprofitable*. What profit is there in this Anxiety? or what advantage arises from these *tumultuous thoughts*? none, no ways. Are my Debtors *Insolvent*? this will not recover them. Are they *Knavish*, and do they deal unjustly? this will not reform them. The wrong is not one jot removed by my carking cares.

It is therefore my duty and interest to endeavour to free my self from this Temper. Both humane Prudence and that Wisdom which is from Above demands my Resignation to and my Reliance on God. I have experienc'd

experienc'd him a *preserv'd Help*, — and He is still the Almighty GOD who changes not. Help me O LORD to commit my self to thee in a way of well-doing, to acknowledge thee in all my ways, to be entirely at thy dispose, and let me experience a gracious Providence employ'd in my favour; saving me from my fears, and smiling upon my concerns. Above all grant me an Interest in all the Spiritual Blessings of the New Covenant. This is all my Salvation; for Christ's sake let it be all my Desire. Amen.

I go on to some Records of his religious Notices and Improvement of some Publick Occurrences in the Providence of GOD to the Town. Particularly divers singular Preservations of it from that Contagious Distemper which has hitherto prov'd so Mortal to us, the Small Pocks. His private Fears it must be own'd had much Influence upon him in his Meditations on this Occasion; but how good were those Fears, and how graciously did they work?

THE Small Pocks is bro't into our Harbour — This alarms my fears and awakens
 L 2 Conscience

Conscience to present to my view my Sins, and to make further Enquiries into my past Life. — Now my Sins are call'd over by name, they stare me in the face, they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me. How dark is the tho't of descending into the cold silent Grave? how dreadful is the tho't of Appearing before an infinitely Holy GOD? to have all the Tho'ts, Words & Actions of my Life summ'd up, and a *Definitive Sentence* for an *Eternal State* to pass upon the Whole? O that GOD would fasten his *Convictions* on my Soul, and by this Providence work *savingly* upon me. O that it may please Thee to turn from the threatned Wrath. Command the *Angel of Death* not to invade the Town. Behold at thy right Hand the *Great Sacrifice* for the Sin of the Congregation, and be *Atoned* to us. Let the *Plague* be stay'd. Turn us and Save us.

III.

Again the Town is in very great Danger by a Ship bro't up into the Harbour. The Lord look upon us and turn away his Wrath. As for my self I am personally concern'd, so that my heart is sore pained within me, — and I think, O that I had Wings like a Dove, then

then would I fly away. But *whither shall I flee from thy Presence?* My Times are in thy Hands; My days are appointed, beyond which I cannot prolong the date; and short of which no Disease, no Hazard, no Accident nor Design whatsoever shall or can remove me. ——— But thro' the Undeserved Mercy of GOD this *Cloud is blown over*, and the Town enjoys a great measure of Health, for which I desire to be very thankful. But how do I improve the Favour? What Influence hath the *Forbearance* of God upon me? ———

III.

This Morning on my going Abroad I was inform'd that a Vessel which arriv'd here last Week from Ireland had been visited with the *Small Pocks* in her Passage: About *Fourteen* Persons have had it; She bro't about *Eighty* Persons who have been on shore and about the Town ever since; they brought ashore their Cloaths, have lodg'd in Families, and we are by it in very great Danger of this *Mortal and Contagious Sickness*. Nor can there be any room to expect a Respite, only by an uncommon Appearance of the power and goodness of God. ——— It is therefore a Day of great Distress. Should God proceed
against

against us according to the *threatning face* of this Providence, how dreadful would it be? Here are many *Thousands* that have not had it; the *Winter* is advancing; *Supplies* would be kept back; and who can say how great the *Distress* would be?

Lord thy Hand is lifted up! but spare thy People; not for *our* sake but for thy *Great Name* sake. Thou hast deliver'd in Times of extream hazard, and when there was no help to be expected but from thy immediate Interposition: *Thine Arm is not shortened*. On Thee I humbly wait for Deliverance, and in thy Almighty Power and Grace I would humbly trust that thou wilt yet deliver. O hear the *Cries* that are going up unto thee, look on CHRIST the Great Sacrifice for the Sin of the *Town*, and spare thy people O Lord! ——— We are a very *Sinful* People; O *triumph* in thy Forbearance towards us.

As for my *Self* and *Children*, who are all of us liable to the Arrests of *this Sickness* if it should prevail; I humbly *for Christs sake* entreat thee with my whole heart. Lord awaken me by this Providence to be more *weaned* from the World, to *sue out* the Pardon of my Sins, to seek after an Interest in thy favour. Lord grant me *my Life* at my Request,

quest, and the Life of my Children and Family at my Petition; and let us living and dying be *thine*.

○ God be merciful to the Town. Draw a line of Protection round about it. *Smite us not*, but be *Entreated* of us and for us; and yet turn from the fierceness of thine Anger, and be atoned to us for *Christ His sake*. Amen.

— And now how *Illustriously* will the Goodness and Power of God appear, should we be *preserved* in such eminent hazard? When I consider the Depravity & corruption of the Town; the Intemperance, the Injustice, the Lewdness, the prophane Cursing and Swearing that is in it, I have little Encouragement to expect a *Respite*. But when I consider the Sacrifice of Christ for the Congregation; when I consider that as *bad* as we are, yet that God is *more* fear'd, and better serv'd; that the Sabbath is better sanctified, that Vice is more scandalous — than any where else, it gives me some Encouragement to hope that God will spare us. For altho' we are very sinful, yet — if there be in the Land a greater Number in proportion than *elsewhere* of holy, pious, prayerful Persons, who mourn for the Sins of the Place,

Place, that fear God, love Christ and hate Sin, will not God make a difference? Would he have spared Sodom had there been Ten Righteous Persons in it, and will he not spare this great Town, in which it may be charitably hop'd there are a much greater Number that fear God and are afraid of his Judgments? — Will not God own his Own Work, encourage and reward it? — So that tho' I can't comfort my self from any thing in us, yet I would humbly support my self, and strengthen my Trust in His Great Name, and in the Advancement of His Glory.

On his Birth Day.

August, 29. This Day is the Anniversary of my Birth. O that I were suitably sensible of and affected with the Goodness and Power of God. By Help receiv'd from him it is that I have continued now — Years in the World. When I consider that I came into it a Sinner against GOD, and at Enmity to him, dead in Law, dead in Trespases and Sins; What reason have I to Adore his sparing Mercy. When I consider the Sins of Youth, and the Aggravations of my Sins

of

of riper years, and that they have been innumerable, how justly may I be astonished at God's Patience and Long-suffering? When I consider the many Dangers I have escaped, at Sea in Storms, at Land in places of Mortal Contagious Sickneses, and some particular Deliverances from Death in eminent hazards, besides the innumerable Accidents common to all daily, I must with wonder and thankfulness cry out, — *Lord, what am I that thou art thus mindful of me?* — Nor am I only *spar'd* but *incircled* with Abundance of Good. My house is fill'd with every good thing. And what is more I have the *Heritage of those that fear His Name*. The *Manna* of Heaven is rained about my house. O that I were sensible of my Privileges, and that my profiting were answerable.

Lord thou hast lifted me up, — continue thy Loving kindness to me. *Spare me this Tear also*. Deal favourably with me in thy Providence. Break in upon me by thine Almighty Grace. Prepare me for all Events. Let not my spared Life be to increase Guilt, but to advance thy Glory, and to *work out my Salvation* more thoroughly; And when *Death* comes let it be *safe and joyful*.

On a New-Years-Day.

BEing brought to the beginning of a *New Year* I have withdrawn my self this Day to humble my Soul before God by *Prayer with Fasting*, to confess my Sins, to Supplicate the Divine Favour, and to implore the Smiles of God, more especially in the following *Particulars*.

1. *That I may obtain the free and full remission of all my Sins*, which are many in number, and great in circumstance. *That the Spirit from on high may be poured out upon me*, that I may have Grace to *live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil World*. *That God would strengthen in me the things that remain, and carry on his work in my Soul to perfection*. *That I may be fav'd from Temptations, supported under them, and safely delivered out of them*. *That I may be conducted safely through the changes, and snares of this sinful troublesome World unto Eternal Glory*.

2. *That my Secular Affairs may be smiled on*: *That God who hath lifted me up, would not return to cast me down*. *That he would prosper my undertakings, give me favour with my Employers, — prevail on them and others*

others further to improve me, and make me faithful, prudent, diligent and successful in managing the concerns committed to me.

3. That inasmuch as God in His Providence hath bereaved me of my Companion; He would be pleas'd mercifully to direct and succeed me in the choice of another. That he wou'd graciously dwell under my roof, and favour me with his visits, that I may have wisdom and grace to govern my Family and educate my Children. That I may not in my choice of a Wife be rash, and inconsiderate, hurried by sensual desires, or any irregular motives. That seeing all my caution and thoughtfulness is not sufficient to save me from entangling my self in difficulties and sorrows, if God withdraws; for after all possible search and enquiry I may remain ignorant of the temper, disposition, and circumstances of the Person I joyn with; That therefore I may be daily waiting upon God, and have my trust entirely in him for guidance and influence. A prudent Wife is of the Lord, where then should I go, but unto him for this Gift, Lord help me to wrestle, and O that I may prevail with God for favour in this particular; the Person I may joyn with, her temper, conduct, and

M 2

other

other circumstances will be a very great favour or frown of God; will much add to the comfort or sorrow of my present life, and have a considerable influence on my Spiritual concerns, and my preparation for another and an unchangeable State. In this *Article* therefore, O Lord allow me, a Worm, a Sinner, to be earnest, to approach with holy freedom and boldness unto the Throne of Grace, and Lord grant me a gracious Answer, which may fill my mouth with Praises, and encourage me to call upon thee so long as I live.

4. That I may have a right understanding in the nature and duty of a Justice of the Peace, which Office I now sustain, that I may Rule with diligence, that I may do nothing through partiality, that I may in the fear and strength of God, proceed without fear of, or favour to any Man.

5. That God wou'd be pleas'd to restore my lip to it's former soundness, that he would mortify the humour that he would not separate me to my dismal fears; but as there is an Abatement of the *Malady*, so he would be pleas'd perfectly to deliver me, and fill my mouth with laughter and my lip with rejoycing.

6. That my Children may have the Grace of God implanted in them. That they may be kept from the Infection of an evil World, flee youthful lusts, be cover'd under the shadow of the Wings of the most High GOD; live and do worthily in their Generation, and be the Heirs of Eternal Life.

7. That GOD would have a compassionate Regard to my Mother in her present languishing Circumstances, that he would be the Lord her Healer, spare and prolong her Life if it may be; that her Sins may be Pardoned, and her End may be Peace.

8. That I may be in a suitable Frame, duly prepared to wait upon GOD in the holy Exercises of the Approaching Day, and particularly at the Table of Christ, that I may not eat and drink to my own Condemnation, but by Faith feed on the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and my Soul may be satiated with his Goodness.

Lastly, While I am thus Addressing the God of all Grace for my self and Friends, I desire not to forget *Jerusalem*, but Pray that Peace may be in her Walls, and Prosperity in her Palaces: that our Nations may be compass'd with Salvation: that the King may live: that the Royal Family may flourish: that this

this *Land* may abide before GOD continually: that the *Natives* who dwell in the *Wilderness* may bow down to *Christ*; that *this Tear* begun may not be dark, sickly, deadly, or on any Account distressing: that as the *last*, so *this* may be crown'd with the Favour of GOD, and much more abundantly: that the *Province* may be smil'd on in all its Interests, and all Orders and Societies of Men be blessed and made Blessings. That this *Town* may be very remarkably pious, vertuous and favoured by God; and that the *whole Earth* may be filled with His Glory.

To each and all of these Particulars, LORD bow down thine Ear and hear for *Christ Jesus* sake: *Amen* and *Amen*. Lord say *Amen*.

Upon his being Nam'd for and his Accepting of the Commission for the Peace.

D*Ecember 11. 1715.* Being yesterday informed that I was appointed one of the *Justices of the Peace for the County of Suffolk*, it was very surprizing to me. As I never sought it, nor made any Friends to obtain it for me, so neither had I any expectation of it, nor do I know what were the Means, or who the Instruments of bringing it about, —

I therefore think it my present *Duty* to enquire whether I shou'd accept or decline the *Office*, and in Sincerity and Earnestness to ask Advice of God, his Direction and Influence.

Promotion comes neither from the East or from the West, but the Sovereign God is the Arbiter and Disposer thereof. It is He that hath inclined my Superiours to this Choice: *He is my Glory and the lifter up of my head.* HE hath done me this Publick honour. My *Stature is low* and thereby I am expos'd to Flirts and Squibs, *I am little and despised*; but God thinks upon me, and is wiping away my reproach. —

And here I must first consider the *Qualifications* for it, and the *Duties* of it. It requires *Knowlege in the Law*. It calls for *Prudence, Courage, Faithfulness, Diligence* and for *Impartiality*. That I be *Eyes to the blind, Feet to the lame*, that I put to my Shoulder in suppressing of Vice and Prophaneness, that I be Exemplary, Grave, Temperate, Just, Patient, and excel in all Vertue; that in matters between Man and Man I regard not the Rich any more than the Poor; that in routs and riots; in drunkenness and other crimes (which are too common in this *Town*)

I have no respect of Persons. That I suffer not a Person of Distinction by his Estate, or Commission to escape with impunity, any more than an inferiour Person; and that I connive at the Immoralities of none through fear or favour, and this *because of the Oath of God*. Here's the Office that I am call'd to. — It is an honourable Post, but it is also burthenfome; To take up only, or principally for the sake of the honour, without a regard to the duty will be vain and unworthy of a *Christian*. What comfort will arise at *Death* that I have had the Title of *Esqr*; and have been lifted up a small degree above my Neighbours, if my conduct be not answerable to my Post? I confess that I feel my self too much elated and carnally pleas'd with the thing; but I desire with my Soul to abhor my self for it, to suppress these motions of Pride, and I mourn before God under the sense of it, I hope it is *the Evil that I would not*. —

I have not had leifure to write any more before I have had the Advice, and Request of sundry Persons in *Town*, and Letters from *Salem* signifying that in their Judgment it is my duty to accept of this Office. The Sum of what they have said to perswade me to it, is

is, That I have a clear call to be serviceable to the *Publick*; As to my *Objection* of not being read in the *Law*, they reply that few at their first Entrance are knowing therein; that a few Months industry will furnish me in some good measure; that if I refuse, the Commission will be filled up with another it may be as little acquainted in the *Law* as my self: — That immorality and prophaneſs do much abound in the Town, that few have courage to stem the Current, and that in their Opinion now that I have a door open for it, I shall sin in refusing to bear a Publick Testimony against this Torrent of Vice: that by being cloathed with Authority, and having the Sword of Justice in my hand, I may be a terror to evil doers, and instrumental of much good. What they have said hath been with that seriousness, and sincerity as I charitably suppose, and they are Persons of that Gravity, Wisdom, and Piety, that I dare not but pay a great deference to their Judgments; so that ruminating thereon, it appear'd to me that my call is clear from God, and Man, and that I ought to answer it. Moreover at length I found that if Vice prevails, if disorders, revels, routs should continue,

N

tinue, or increase, it wou'd in some measure lye at my door, for that I have an opportunity to assist in suppressing them, and yet declined my help. I foresaw that this wou'd *gall my mind*, and although there may be some oblique views in my Acceptance, yet I hope I sincerely aim and resolve to do all the Good I can, and diligently to apply my self to the means of knowlege, I beg repentance and pardon for what I find of Error, I beg direction and assistance in the discharge of the Post.

And therefore on *Tuesday* the 27th of *December* 1715. I took the *Oath of GOD* to intend and discharge the Office of a *Justice of Peace for the County of Suffolk*, according to the best of my understanding, and to dispense Justice equally without respect of Persons. And now by the Grace and Help of God, I design *as I have Sworn to perform it*, and to proceed without partiality. I look on my self bound to study the *Law*, and in all cases to proceed towards the Rich and Poor, without making any difference. — My duty is to endeavour that the end and design of the Law be complied with so far as it is in my power, to shake my hands from bribes, to be laborious in suppressing of Vice, to be impartial

impartial in administering of Justice, to be zealous in the Cause of God, to favour no Man, to fear no Man, and patiently to bear the censures and talk of fools, when they rate me as imprudent or a *Busie body*, or a forward Man, one that loves to be seen, only because I discharge the obligation that I am under: And it may be they would reflect as much, and with more reason, if I should neglect what they exclaim at. This I must expect, and if it were insupportable I should have refused the Charge. But I have Accepted; the Oath of God is upon me, it will be *Sin now to Enquire*.

Therefore O most Mighty and Glorious GOD who art Infinite in Wisdom, in Goodness, Holiness, Justice and Truth, and in all Perfection, before whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secret is hid, I humbly pray thee that thou wouldst freely pardon whatever of Obliquity and Error hath been prevailing in me to accept this Office, and whatever aims and views I have had at thy Glory, and to serve thy Interest have influenced me to lay my self under an Oath thereunto, graciously Accept me therein; and inasmuch as I want wisdom and knowlege, courage, resolution, patience and

discretion, and other qualifications to the free and faithful discharge of this Trust that is reposed in me. And Thou art the Fountain of all, and hast commanded us to acknowledge thee in all our ways, and directed us that if we lack wisdom, we should ask it of thee, who givest liberally without upbraiding, I beg of thee to give me a Disposition diligently to attend the means for obtaining a right understanding of the nature and duty of my Office, and give success to my Endeavours, encourage my heart and strengthen my hands, let nothing be done thro' strife, vain glory, or partiality, but in singleness of heart, with a single aim at the Glory of God, and with a fervent zeal against Vice and all Immorality; And inasmuch as I may have many ill tempers to confront, sons of Belial, that have or would cast off the yoke of Government, to contend with, and many dark intricate Cases to manage, therefore I beseech Thee to bestow on me all that calmness, prudence, discretion, knowledge, courage and resolution, which from time to time I may stand in need of. On the one hand save me from rashness and intangling my self in Difficulties and Sorrows; On the other hand support and encourage me in striving against

against Sin, and let me not be weary of well-doing; Let all my proceedings be such as may be justifiable in the sight of God and before Man. Let the fear of God be before my eyes, and let the favour of God encompass me, for the sake of *Jesus Christ*, unto *Him* with the *Father* and the *Holy Spirit* be ascribed the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, *Amen*.

Upon the Death of his *Wife*.

Her Husband also and He praiseth her.

July 15. 1716. After many years Weakness, and the Sorrows of a broken Health, and about Eight Months confinement by a grievous Cough and a returning Fever, it pleased God to take away my *Wife* on *Tuesday* the 10th Current, about Twelve a Clock at Night. The *Lord* sanctifie the stroke to me, and grant that I may lay to heart his hand, that I may wisely observe his doings, and with Correction receive Instruction. We were *Married* together *October* the 17th 1700. In her whole Behaviour it hath appear'd to me that she truly
feared

feared God, and hated that which she knew to be sinful. She did not affect the Gaiety and Vanity of the World, either in dress or any thing else, she was a constant keeper at home, and looked upon the *Evening late Visits* of Neighbours very unseasonable on many accounts, particularly as they excluded *private Devotions*, and were a cause of shuffling over *Family Duties*: I mean the Worship of God in them. Her Attire was neat, conformable to the decent Customs of the Town, but never in the extream, she loved not to be first, nor the last in a new mode. She was excellent at her Needle. Far from a stingy penurious Spirit, yet no ways extravagant in her expences. She was a *vertuous Woman*; and her price was *above rubies*. My heart safely trusted in her, nor was I ever in any fear of wrong from her, or wait by her in my Substance. She wrought willingly with her hands, and I doubt more than was consistent with her health. She stretch'd out her hand to the poor, and the needy have cause to remember her with honour. She carefully discharged her duty to her Servants: even the meanest in the Family had her regards, I mean my Negro Man, whom she always allowed Bread

Bread to the full, and decent suitable Cloathing. She was much concerned for his Spiritual and Eternal Welfare, and was indefatigable in her endeavours to learn him to read. She was a Woman of great Understanding, and a clear Judgment. She look'd well to the ways of her Household, and eat not the Bread of Idleness. She was a very tender affectionate Mother to her Children, and had a peculiar skill in Educating of them, and through the Grace of God they honoured and highly esteem'd her. She loved the Habitation of God's House, the Place where His Honour dwells. She esteem'd the Ministers of Christ very highly for their works sake. She honour'd the *Sabbath* of the Lord, and on that Day (at her desire) I used to awake her an hour earlier in the Morning than she usually rose at. She was constant in her Secret Devotions, and allowed the Servants time for it, if they would improve it: and when she observed any of them to do so, it much endeared them to her.

She lived believing that she must Dye, and the thought of it was for the most part of her life a great Terror to her. Her last Sickness gave the first Assault suddenly and violently, which fill'd her with amazing fears with
respect

respect to her Soul, this darkness continued about Two weeks, for which space she had no comfort, she could not rest Day or Night, wringing her hands, and watering her Couch with her tears, wrestling and pleading with God for Pardon of Sin, and an interest in Christ, and the Evidences of it : God graciously was prevailed on ; heard her Prayers, compos'd her mind, and gave her a good hope through Grace, so that she maintained a wonderful chearfulness through the remaining part of her time. Through the Goodness of God, until about two Months before she died, she had her rest uninterrupted, being free from pain and her Cough abating in the Night ; so that she prosecuted her preparations for Death with little Obstruction. About Twelve Days before she Died, her illness came upon her violently, and shock'd her in a few hours exceedingly ; from this time she had no expectation of continuance, but still would be in the use of means, saying that she would not throw away her life. But all was ineffectual, she declin'd sensibly every Day ; At last God made her willing to Dye, and to desire not to return to the World. She would often repeat Rev. 21. 4. *And there shall be no more sorrow,*

sorrow, nor pain, nor crying, nor death, for the former things are passed away. On her last day she said the time past slowly. She was to the last perfect in her understanding, which was agreeable to her desires: for she requested of me some days before her Death, that if she should lose her speech, I would not suffer her to have any Opiate or dozing Application not for a thousand Worlds. About Twenty Minutes before she Died she desired to be turned in her Bed being weary with lying, which was done for her, but it was more than her strength would allow, so that she grew faint and groaned, being asked if she felt any pain, she answered, *All is Easie*, and in a few Minutes departed this Life, to the Enjoyment of that which is Eternal, beyond the reach of Sin and Sorrow, all Lusts are perfectly subdued, all her Enemies totally vanquish'd, and she triumphs gloriously in the God of her Salvation. No more Doubts disquiets her, no more Fears disrest, she rests not only in the Assurance, but in the Enjoyment of Gods love, and her rest is Glorious.

The Lord awaken me by this heavy Dispensation to give all diligence to prepare for my own turn, and in the hopes which

we have of her safe Arrival at the Place and State of the *Saints Everlasting Rest*, let my meditations on Heaven, and the possibility of getting there add a new pleasure to my thoughts, and excite me to greater diligence in my preparations, that I may meet her at the *Last Day*, that we may ascend together after the Judgment, *and be ever with the Lord*. And now,

O Lord God, who art the *God of the Spirits of all Flesh*, I humbly pray thee to break in upon my Soul by thy all-conquering Grace, let this Providence prove of saving advantage to me, suffer me not to despise thy chastenings, nor to faint under thy rebukes; help me to glorify thee in the day of visitation. Let all my Sins be forgiven, particularly my Sins in the relation I stood in to her; for I have been very defective in my duty in this as well as other instances, and stand in need of pardoning mercy. Whatsoever was pure, whatsoever was praise-worthy in her, help me to think of those things, and to follow her wherein she followed Christ, let me always think of her with esteem and honour, and her name be to me as precious Ointment. And now that my Children and Family are under my more immediate

immediate Government, bestow on me all that love and tenderneſs, that prudence and wiſdom, that patience and meekneſs, that courage and reſolution that I need and every gift and grace that is neceſſary to qualify me for their Education, and the overſight of them. Dwell O Gracious GOD under my roof, let my Children be thine, let them be the care of a gracious Providence, the ſubjects of thy Grace, and the objects of thy Complaiſance. Let them live and do worthily in their Generation. Let my Servants ſerve the Lord, be faithful and chearful in their Service to me and mine, and let my whole houſe be a *Bethel* conſecrated to GOD; Let us live in love and peace, let me walk with a perfect heart in my houſe maintaining the Worſhip of God in it, furniſh me with all thoſe gifts and graces which I am more eſpecially called in my preſent circumſtances to the exerciſe of. Save me from ſinning againſt thee, uphold my goings in thy way, that my feet ſlip not. Give me my daily Bread, feed me with Food convenient, carry me through all my changes, fit me for my laſt, eſtabliſh thy Covenant with me for an Everlaſting Covenant to be a God to me and to my Seed, be my Portion

in the Land of the Living, and be my Portion forever. This is all my Salvation, and all my desire, Fulfil it for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ to Him with the Father and the Holy Ghost be Glory forever. Amen.

A Solemn Act of SELF-DEDICATION.
 Begun August 25, and finish'd September
 23. 1716.

AUGUST 25, 1716. It having pleased God of late greatly to afflict me, by taking away my *Wife*; whom I can with Sincerity call the desire of my Eyes: and also in causing a violent and obstinate humour to settle for some Months in my *Lip* by which He threatned to separate me to a very *dismal evil*; I wou'd therefore now humble my self under his rebukes, and justify him in his proceedings, acknowledging that the Lord is Righteous for I have sinned against him; and I also ascribe Mercy as well as Righteousness to my Maker, for it is from thence that I am not consumed. And now under his Rod I desire heartily to submit, and accept of the punishment of my Sins, and under my bereavement to cleave the closer to him, believing

lieving that *it is good for me to draw near to God*. I confess that I have walked very untowardly, very unsuitable to that Profession that I make, and those Bonds that I am under: Lord I am thine by all Engagements, but I have not been Even and Stedfast in my walk; I have revolted, and turned back, and gone on perversely in my own ways, particularly I confess, that I have been very defective in *Relative Duties*; and more particularly, I fear that I did not carry it as I ought to my *Wife*, that I was too impatient, too apt to resent what was offensive to me, that I was not assisting in her Spiritual concerns as I should have been; and for these and other miscarriages thou hast smote me. I lie at thy foot, I beg forgiveness for Christ's sake, I would fly to thy Mercy through him. As a Father pitties his Children, so do thou pity me; Lord, cast me not off, but grant me an interest in that Covenant which *Christ* is the Mediator of, bestow on me the Spiritual Blessings of it, be my God and make me thy Servant devoted to thy fear; suffer me not to depart from thee, but help me to cleave to thee with full purpose of heart. In a sense of my miscarriages, in a sense of my duty to love, obey and serve thee, I
have

have for some weeks past purposed to lay my self under *new Ties* hereunto, and to Vow that if God will graciously heal my Lip, and save me from my fears, *that God shall be my God*, and that I will be for him and for him only. This Bond I am under antecedent to any Vow, even from my first breath, but I make the Vow in gratitude to God, and to strengthen my Obedience, and although God hath mercifully abated the Malady, and very much hush'd my fears; Yet I look on my self bound to comply with my purposes, yea the unexpected favour of God shall encourage me hereunto

August 26. And I do now humbly, seriously and thankfully avouch the *Great Jehovah*, One God, in Three Persons, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* for my God, devoting and dedicating unto Him my self, my Children, all that I am, and all that I have, to his Service and for his Glory: owning his right and propriety in me and mine; and promising by his Grace (on which I depend) not to alienate any thing from him. As I said before, so I repeat it: *It is good for me to draw near to God.* The Worldling, the Intemperate, the Unchast may vainly and foolishly think their *Good* consists in the gratification

fication of their different inclinations; and too long have I sought happiness in sinful ways, and too much do I decline from the paths of Vertue, and too prone am I to start from what in my Judgment appears to be my duty: yet I believe it is best for me to keep to God, to walk with him, to trust in him, to obey his Commands, and to have him for the portion of my Soul forever. I have lately seen my Wife fainting and languishing for many Months, under a prevailing consuming Sickness; I have heard her groans, I have known the fears, and the hopes of her Soul too in her departing days; did she not then say, that to be without an Interest in Christ was to be most miserable, that an Interest in him was more Valuable than a thousand Worlds, and that her hope therein was her only support and kept her from sinking.

September 1. And will it not be *my turn* ere long? Must I not follow her into the dark and silent Grave? Well in the Approaches of that King of Terrors, surely the World will appear as a cheat, Sin exceeding sinful, Hell very terrible, and the Wrath of God amazing. Then Holiness will be prized, a Pardon highly valued, the Favour of God
most

most desired, and without (at least) a good hope of it my Soul will be in bitterness. Grant then O LORD that I may realize things now, as I shall do then. That I may be watchful, humble, meek, righteous, patient, self-denying, temperate, chaste, & prayerful, and that above all things I may put on Charity. LORD possess me with the truth of Grace, and give to me a sight and sense of it in my Soul. Give me a true lively Faith in the *Lord Jesus*, that I may become united to him, that I may have a constant supply of all Grace from him, and grow up into him in all things who is the head. Let his Sacrifice atone for me, his Righteousness justify me, his spirit sanctifie me; and thus being made strong by his Grace, beautiful thro' his Comeliness, and righteous thro' his Righteousness, let me at last meet my Wife with comfort; and not be ashamed when the Son of Man shall appear in Power and great Glory.

But before this Great Change, God only knows what *lesser Changes* may pass over me; I may be Prosperous, Honourable, Healthy, the World smiling on me, the Rocks pouring out Oil to me, I may swim in Outward Enjoyments: But if I have not the Favour
of

of God, where lies the advantage of all this? I shall never until then, obtain any solid satisfaction, the meanest and most despicable Person on earth, having the favour of God, knows more of true comfort and happiness; than that Man does, who is destitute of it, though he hath a plentiful Harvest, and divides the Spoil.— On the other hand I may be crossed, disappointed, reproached, malign'd, reviled, become dishonourable and base in the eye of the World. I may have my body filled with loathsome, painful diseases; my Estate wasted, my Name vilified, my Children removed.

September 9. But if I have a GOD to repair to, all will be well: if not, what a sting will be in all, how wretched is that Man's condition, that must bear his burden himself; that hath neither skill, nor will, nor encouragement to cast it upon God! but how happy is the Person that enjoys God in all, that in the Smiles of Providence receives the favours as coming from a Fathers hand, and as a token of special love: that under corrections hath Divine teachings, and consolations, that hath the rod as well as the staff of God to comfort him: He's free from the tumult and disorder, that arises in

the Soul destitute of Grace; God sustains him, he shall not be cast down. A good Man is satisfied from himself: he submits, he bears the Indignation of the Lord, he waits with patience God's time for Deliverance; in the mean time he improves his changes in a diligent Preparation for his last, and supports himself that although his Afflictions may continue until that time, yet then they shall come to a perpetual end, and that in the mean time they shall subserve to his real happiness. In this view he rejoices in Tribulation, he rejoices in hope of the Glory of God.

This confirms more strongly what is before asserted; *that it is good for me to draw near to God.* And as I ought to do this on all Occasions, so more especially in particular Cases, The particular Causes of this Transaction are already mentioned; to which I would add *Another* of great concern, though not thought of until now, *viz.* By the Death of my *Wife* I am dismiss'd from the Relation I stood in, to her, and am free to marry another, and although I have no intention to do it as yet, nor is there any Person in the World that my thoughts have gone forth after so as to design an address to her

her in this relation ; yet inasmuch as Marriage is a remedy against Sin, the Ordinance of God, and a state (where the tempers are agreeable) most eligible, and on many accounts to be preferr'd to a single life. I would therefore be *early* with God, whom I ought to acknowledge in all my ways, and I earnestly entreat thy favour in this affair, That if I should again make suit to any Person in order to Marriage, thou wouldst mercifully direct me in my choice, and succeed me therein : let me not be led by fancy, nor aim principally at Worldly Interest, but chiefly let my aim be at a Person of Vertue and Piety, understanding and prudence ; diligence and faithfulness, frugality and liberality ; a healthy constitution, a good temper, and a meek and quiet Spirit : Let her be one whose feet will abide in my House, in whom my heart may safely trust, who will stretch forth her hands to the Poor, and in whose tongue is the law of kindness : who will do me good and not evil : who will carry it well to my Children, not scrape and get all she can from them, not slight and despise them ; not begrutch what is bestow'd on them : but that will study their comfort, rejoyce in
P 2 their

their welfare, and tenderly regard their Education. — That we may (being coupled in fear) walk together in all the Ordinances, and Commandments of the Lord without blame, and be Heirs together of the Grace of Life.

September 22. These are the Mercies and Favours which in a more particular manner I am at this time waiting on God to bestow upon me ; the conferring of which shall lay me under a fresh and stronger obligation of Devotedness to him all my days.

And I do now after some *Weeks* Consideration before I began this Solemn Transaction, and after the space of time which as my leisure allowed me, I have been composing this *Instrument*, I say after so long a time of consideration, I do now continue of the same mind, *that it is best for me to draw near to God.* And therefore I most seriously, solemnly, and without reserve, do devote and consecrate unto God, my self and mine to be His for ever, promising not to allow my self in any known Sin, praying that I may be kept from every secret Sin, from indulging any Lust, that though it be as dear as my right hand or right eye, I may be separated from it. And that if there is any
thing

thing now, that is offensive to God which I have an unwillingness to be sensible of (as I know of none) or if hereafter it should be so, that God of His Infinite Mercy and Free Grace would open my eyes, and hasten the day of His Power to make me willing.

September 23. In a sense of my own weakness, I desire to lay hold on God's strength; in a sense of my defects, my proneness to transgress, my backwardness to duty, my imperfect obedience, I renounce and disclaim all righteousness of my own; I would fly to, and lay hold on the Righteousness of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, & on that only, as being only, as being alone sufficient to justify me. Many & great have been my Sins, but the Blood of *Jesus* cleanses from all Sin, frequent are my miscarriages and slips and falls, but God can uphold and make me to stand. Its his promise, I will heal your backslidings and love you freely; I will pardon your iniquities and receive you graciously. I will put my fear in your hearts and you shall not depart from me. In God I will praise his Word by believing it. O let me experience the truth of it. Lord I am thine save me: let me never forget thy Precepts, never forget my Bonds. Be thou my Portion
in

in the Land of the Living. My God in Life, my Guide unto, my Stay in Death, and my Portion for ever. Make me stedfast in thy Covenant, leave me not to trifle with thee, and with my Soul. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me. Fit me for all Changes, especially for my last; let me have hope in the Day of Death, a good hope that will not fail me, that so I may have confidence in the Day of Judgment. This Solemn *Dedication* of my self to the *One True and Living God*, Father, Son, & Holy Ghost, I now finish as my Free-Will-Offering, and subscribe to it as my Voluntary Act and Deed, this *Twenty-third* Day of September 1716.

* *Grove Hirst.*

Upon the *Death* of his *MOTHER*.

Her Children rise up and call her Blessed.

A *Pril* 21. 1717. I am now again under the *Rebukes* of God, who on the *Fifteenth* Instant about *Four* a Clock removed my *MOTHER* from hence to the *Heavenly World*. When I say to the *Heavenly World*;

I say what I cannot without breach of charity but conclude. Ever since my remembrance she hath been strictly Religious. In the Infancy of me, and my Sister *Price*, she was unwearied in her endeavours to implant a *holy Principle* in us, and continued constantly to instruct us in the things of our everlasting Concerns ; She *taught us also, and said unto us, let your hearts retain my words — Get wisdom, get understanding, forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth.* She watched over us with a holy jealousy, encouraged us when we did well, reprov'd and corrected us when we erred : She charged us to keep the Commandments of the Lord : she frequently called us aside from the Family, to counsel, warn and advise us, to *Pray* with us, and for us, and was full of concern for our Immortal Souls. Nor was she at all remiss in a prudent care for our present welfare ; but freely laid her self out for our comfort in Sicknefs and in Health ; and I suppose her not less thoughtful for my *two Brothers*, but they being much younger than we, her conduct to them fell not under our observation. As for my *Sister* and my *Self* we are witnesses to her Prayers, her Tears, her constant retirements for secret Devotion ;

Devotion ; her Charity, her Labours of Love, her good Works ; and this in Opposition to long and fore Temptations.

She was an active diligent Woman, a faithful prudent Wife, a tender affectionate Mother, a friend to the Poor ; and they lament the Loss of her. I cannot but think that she was a *real Christian*, she was mighty in the Scriptures, a devout Woman, that feared God, and Prayed always.

Indeed she was mostly under *Darkness*, and did not shine so bright as some (perhaps of less worth) by reason of many, long, and violent Temptations. But I know her secret mournings, her *fears*, her bitterness, and some of her *hopes* too. Holy Men, Holy Conversation was what she delighted in ; and I cannot think (who best knew her of any Person) but that God hath taken her Soul to the Spirits of *Just Men made perfect*, and to the Enjoyment of *Himself*.

Well then having this hope I may *not weep for her*, but for my *Self*, who am yet in Arms, in a Militant state, called to the exercise of patience, hardiness, watchings and labours. The Lord grant I may be faithful, diligent, always upon my Guard, resisting stedfastly striving against Sin until

I am dismiss'd and then through *Christ* let me be more than a Conquerour: Let me put off my Armour in Triumph. *Amen.*

On the *Supposal* of his *Marrying* again.

A Prudent Wife is of the Lord.

GOD hath made *Man* a sociable Creature, and therefore saw it was not good for him to be *alone*. In his holy and unerring Providence he hath taken away my *Wife*, and I am left desolate; my present single state is very unagreeable, which together with the consideration of my Children being all young, and in want of a prudent *Guide* and Overseer, and being chiefly *Daughters*, makes it appear necessary that I Marry again: This is a Transaction of such concernment, and great importance; the welfare and comfort, or the trouble and sorrow of my future Life, the advantage or damage of my Children depending so much upon the Temper and Circumstances; the agreeableness or unsuitableness of the Person whom I make choice of;—and it will have such an influence on my Spiritual Concerns,

Q

that

that I am in a great strait.— Well then why can't I live *Single*, where is the necessity of *Marriage*? I know of no absolute necessity, but if God bestows on me a suitable agreeable *Wife*, it will be much to the comfort of my Life, and much to the advantage of my Children; for although my *Housekeeper* is a very prudent, quiet, faithful and discreet Woman; and I cannot mend my self in the Post she is in; yet my Children know that she is subject to me, and will not submit to her, nor be directed by her as to a Person my equal, and that bears the title of *Mother*, nor would it be prudent in me to give her such an absolute power over them, nor to expect such an entire subjection from them to her; as would be granted to a *Wife*, and I should expect they should yield to her for their good.— After all I have wrote, and more that I have thought of this affair, there is such a dependence on the Person I may Marry, and the consequences of my Marriage, of me and my Children being advantaged or prejudiced, that I know not what to do, but my eyes are unto thee O God the Lord for direction, influence and favour.

June 29. 1717. And I sequester my self
that

that I may at this time with the more freedom, humbly and earnestly seek thy favour in this affair of so great Importance. Lord be with me, fill me with suitable desires, help me to plead in a right manner, to ask under the government of a holy principle, and to draw nigh to thee in the Name and Merits of *Christ*. I look on it as my duty to be waiting on thee by humble Prayer at all times, and in all cases, especially in great and weighty concerns I look on it as my privilege and advantage that I may do so, then surely I cannot think it a vain thing to commit my self, and all my concerns, and this great concern to God, who can, and who only can give an answer of Peace, the desired answer. Let me by a happy experience find it good to do so. Thou wilt hear the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, and cause thine Ear to hear. Lord prepare my heart and answer my requests, for the preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue are from thee.

O Lord God Almighty, O God of all Grace, who disposest of all Persons and things, according to thy own will; who orderest all affairs, and bringest about all changes, and
Q 2 whose

whose Providence governs the World, and all Creatures; Thou even Thou art the alone Object of Prayer, and whither else should I go, seeing it is with thee to make comfortable or uneasy, happy or miserable. Thou hast made it our duty to prefer our Petitions unto thee, and it is our honour and privilege that we may do so, we are commanded to Pray, and are encouraged by thy Promises to obey this Command. I adore thy Grace and Condescension in this liberty of access unto thee. As *Creatures* we are mean, yet God does not despise us; as *Sinners* we are vile, yet God does not abhor us. Lord who am I *dust and ashes*, a Worm and a Sinner that I should have leave to Pray before thee, the Great and Holy God, with any encouragement of success: But seeing such is thy Grace to Man, that I may come, and wo is unto me if I omit it; let such be thy Grace in me as may enable me to embrace the privilege, and to answer thy demands. Open my mouth wide, fill it with Arguings, and help me to order my Speech before thee. Make me fervent in Spirit while I am waiting upon God. And because that I am a Sinner, and have no right to any favour until I have obtained a Pardon,

Pardon, nor would any temporal good be of any advantage in a state of guilt; therefore I first of all entreat of thee, the free and full remission of all my Sins, Lord pardon mine iniquities for they are very great. Lord do it, and thy Glory shall be great in my Salvation; and as a sign and evidence that thou hast pardoned me, sanctify me and prepare me for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. And now after these requests, which I earnestly above all things Pray in the Name of *Christ* that I may not be denied in, they being above all things most necessary, I bring before thee my particular Concern which at this time I have in a more especial manner sequestred my self to seek thee with respect unto. Lord help me to ask from a right principle, with right aims, and in a right manner. In thy holy and alwise dispensation thou hast bro't me into a single state, in which I have remain'd for such a space of time, as that I may without the charge of indecency, and slight to the memory of my late *Companion* entertain the thoughts of Marrying again. It is a state honourable in all; Thou who knewest it best for Man not to be alone didst ordain and institute Marriage, and *Christ* by his presence

sence hath honoured the Ordinance. It is thy appointment, as to continue Man upon Earth ; so for the comfort of Man while he remains here ; and also as, remedy against Sin. But inasmuch as by Sin we have forfeited every favour ; and by our folly, and thy righteous Judgment for our Sins, even our blessings often prove a curse, and particularly the Marriage Life is frequently a sorrowful, miserable life, arising from the temper and disposition of the Person we Marry, or from some unknown circumstance attending, or unforeseen Providences following us after Marriage ; partly because rashly and suddenly engaged in, without consideration, and from no higher views than the gratification of sense ; and partly from the Sovereignty of God who may dispose of us as he pleases : But yet herein he never acts purely in *Sovereignty*, for we must always acknowledge that the Lord is *righteous*. I therefore look up unto thee O God, for thy gracious direction and influence in this very important Article of my Life. Lord graciously direct and influence me in my choice : or whether not to make choice yet of **any** : Discover to me clearly whether is most expedient, that I remain single, or that I again enter

enter into the Marriage state: And if the former, vouchsafe to me continence, purity of heart, modesty and gravity in conversation, and thy favourable presence and company in my Solitude: if the latter, let me proceed in thy fear, do thou vouchsafe to me Grace and Wisdom to direct and to restrain me, that I may from holy and wise ends make my choice; and don't suffer me to be deceived in the temper, disposition or circumstances of the Person, nor to act rashly, suddenly or inconsiderately, in a light humour; that I should with leisure repent of my hasty act. Let not Beauty allure me: for that is deceitful: nor Riches govern me: for they are uncertain: but tho' these are the gifts of God, to be receiv'd with thanksgiving; yet not firstly and principally to be looked after in the choice of a Wife. Let my choice be of one fearing God, eminent for virtue, meek and quiet in Spirit, prudent, discreet, grave, chaste; and then in a secondary way, let me fix on a Person that is amiable, and whose circumstances may have a prospect of rendering our lives the more comfortable. Lord grant that I may see to this, that I love before I marry, that I well affect her; and that

I

I proceed not precipitantly, but weigh the matter and count the cost; consider my own circumstances, and have a due regard to my dear Children; and having done thus, not rest here, but refer the matter to thee, and have my dependance on thee, for a Person in all respects, suitable and agreeable for me; a meet help while I am in this World, and an assistant in my endeavours to get a part in a better, ——— And grant that whenever I Marry, or with whomsoever, it may be in Mercy, and we may be to each other a rich Gift from God, a token of his especial love and favour, that we may live in love and peace, and that the God of Peace and Love may dwell with us. Grant this O Lord for the sake of *Jesus Christ*, through whom we have Access unto thee, with any hopes of Audience, unto Him with the *Father*, & the *Holy Ghost*, be Glory and Dominion for ever, *Amen*.

A Letter to his Eldest Daughter within the Month wherein he Died,

To Mrs. Mary Hirst, at Salem.

Boston, October 4, 1717.

Dear Child,

HAVING left you at Salem with a Design that you remain there for some Months, and considering that you are just entering the Term which is accounted *Years of Discretion*; but that from the Corruption of Nature, Gaity of Youth, ill Example and neglect of Parents, or from all these Instances they are in reality *Years of the most folly and vanity*; and inasmuch as your future Comfort in this and the other World depends very much on fixing your *Principles* and forming your *Manners* aright while you are Young, and also on your Conduct in the three or four next ensuing Years: For these *Reasons* I cannot answer the Duty of the Relation I stand in, should I omit to present you with a *Repetition* of those Directions and Instructions which you have had constantly Inculcated upon you, and I hope not without Success.

In the first place I charge you to Read a Portion of God's Word, and to retire every Morning and Evening to Worship the Great GOD that made you, and from whom you receive and must expect every good thing. To Him you must seek for the supply of all your Wants, and to Him must be return'd your humble and grateful Acknowledgments for all that you enjoy.

In reading the Scriptures I advise that you pick not here and there a Chapter, but read the Bible in course. It is all equally Inspir'd by the Holy Spirit, and by reading it through you not only shew an equal honour to all, but are most likely to understand what you read; one Scripture being an Interpreter to another, and also you will gain a more general knowlege of the Contents of that Holy Book. Read with an earnest Desire after Spiritual and saving Illumination. It was Timothy's honourable Character, That from a Child he knew the Scriptures.

In your Addresses to God seek first of all His Kingdom, and other things in Subordination and with Reference to that. Remember that GOD is High above all Gods, and that He searches the Heart: Therefore be Reverend. Be sensible of your wants and ask

ask with fervency. Be affected with your *Mercies*, and let the *Author* of them have your hearty Praise. Be convinc'd of your *Unworthiness* and ask in His Name *whom the Father beareth always.*

Attend the Devotions of the *Family* with Constancy and Gravity. Your Years are so far advanc'd that I think I may dismiss you from the common Method of Instruction by *Catechizing*: But keep in mind that *Form of sound Words* which you have heard and learned. When the Publick *Lectures* return, never let your place be empty. Sanctifie GOD's *Sabbaths*, and reverence His *Sanctuary*. And remember that a bare Observation of these Duties is not sufficient. Unless a Tincture of Religion runs thro' your whole Conversation, Acts of Worship will be of little Value. *For the Grace of God that brings Salvation teacheth us, that denying all Ungodliness and Worldly lusts, we live Soberly, Righteously and Godly.*

Therefore in the next place I charge you to abhor every thing that is Evil: Associate not with vain Companions, droll not on the Scriptures, fear that Great and Dreadful Name, the LORD thy GOD; *Flee youthful lusts,*

R 2

keep

keep your self in the fear and then you may expect the favour of GOD.

In your particular Business I exhort to Diligence. Let not your Needle rust for want of using. Man is not made like the *Leviathan* for play, nor like the *Dormouse* to sleep. God expects that we labour working with our hands the thing that is good: if we answer his expectations we may be sure not to fail of a Reward. When you have dismiss'd your Needle, improve your Pen. Writing is so very useful that the general neglect of it in your Sex is a fault that admits of no Excuse.

For your Recreation I advise to the reading of *History* and other Books that may communicate Knowledge. But *Romances* and *Novels* that tend only to corrupt your Mind, omit them; they have no claim to your Time and are unworthy the perusal of a Rational, much more of an Immortal Soul. Sometimes pay a *Visit* to your Relations and Acquaintance, and chuse such for your Companions as you may receive advantage from. Be not light and frolicsome in your Conversation, nor dull and dumpish, but maintain a grave Chearfulness. If any thing *Obscene* is at any time spoke in your Presence, shew your

your dislike by Silence, and refusing so much as to smile at the *impure wit*: By this if they have common Civility they will be prevail'd on to desist for the future, if they have not — forsake 'em.

When you are in the Company of your *Superiours* be modest & sparing in your talk: On the other hand avoid a sheepish, sneaking, whineing Carriage, which will render you contemptible.

Watch against a *haughty, hasty, peevish, temper*, which makes a Person an Offender without cause, and sometimes for Acts of love and friendship. I have known some Persons of such uneasie Spirits, that when they have been told of something amiss, which they knew not of and were glad to rectifie, yet could not bear the Information: At the same time had they known that their Friend saw their Error and omitted to inform them, this also would have been an occasion of Anger: a Temper that deserves both pity and scorn. Take a reproof kindly, especially when you have no cause to think that it proceeds from any other Motive than love and faithfulness.

Let your *Visits* be seldom and seasonable. By being too frequent you may make your
Friends

Friends weary of your Company: Besides the Disreputation you may gain of a Gadder. It is one charge against Solomons light Woman, *Her feet abide not in her house.* Remember *Dinabs* folly and fate. By seasonable Visits I mean that they be rightly tim'd. The fore-part of the day is generally usuitable. And so it is to tarry long at a place. Especially be careful not to be abroad in the Evening. If sometimes you are don't venture home without some sober Person to accompany you. And I should think *Nine a Clock* a good hour to retire to your rest.

As to your *Apparel* conform to decent Customs. As I would not have you the first in nor the last out of a Fashion, so I would have you avoid the excess of any Mode. Keep your Cloaths clean, neat and whole. When ever you espy a fraction or rent in any of your Garments, Woolen or Linen, let it be immediately repaired, without any delay. When ever you undress, fold up your Cloaths and put them in their proper places. ————— I hardly allow any Character of a Woman worse than that of a *Slut*. It is the Offspring of Laziness, and is chargeable with a horrible Waste.

For Piety, Diligence, Industry and Neatness

ness take your *Mother* for an Example and follow her steps. This will be the greatest honour you can shew to her Memory.

Be very prudent in your Behaviour in your *Grand-father's* Family: be very dutiful and respectful to him, and if he should be visited with the *Gout* let him have your cheerful & affectionate Ministrations to the utmost of your Ability. He is your *Father*: Keep in the same Room that he does, and no more in the *Kitchen* than is necessary. Let the Family have as little trouble by your abode there as is possible. — Be sure never to cause any Discord or Uneasiness.

I would have you to be with your *Aunt Price* as often as you can, without neglecting your Work or being too troublesome. She is very capable to instruct you in every thing that belongs to a *Gentlewoman* or a good *Housewife*, and I know she has a Good-will to benefit you. Carry it to her and to your other Relations, your *Superiours*, with much Respect. Your *Aunt Sewall* is an ingenious wife Woman; She dearly lov'd your *Mother*, let her have a share in your Company, and carry it with a suitable Deference.

I have now given you the best Advice I am capable of. I know that some of these
Directions

Directions would have been more proper from *Another*, but it having pleased GOD to deny you that *Privilege* I shall make no *Excuse*. Keep close to GOD in Duty, and He'll either keep you from or support you under Temptations and Troubles.

I pray GOD be with you and keep you in His Fear and Favour. I am,

Dear Child,

Your very Affectionate Father

Grove Hirst.

The Conclusion.

THUS I have presented the Reader with an *Abstract* upon several useful Heads, out of Mr. *Hirst's* private Papers, from which we may best take his *Character*, and be excited unto a secret and close *Walk with GOD* our selves.

For what do Great and Excellent *Examples* serve for? but to allure and charm, persuade and constrain others to come into the Imitation of them. And to what a length in Religion would a conformity to these *Instances* carry us? the rest of our Life being *Uniform* and all of a piece.

Were

Were the *Sabbaths* of God, His *House* and *Table*, His *Word* and Ordinances thus Reverend and Solemn to us! Did we so devoutly eye and venerate the *Providence* of God in Governing and Ordering all that concerns us, whether more immediately or remotely, and set our selves to make a religious *Improvement* thereof! Were we thus taught of God to number aright our *Days* and our *Years*, and to apply our hearts to the wise and serious Consideration of our latter End! Did we enter upon every Publick *Trust* and *Office*, and receive the *Honours* of this World with such religious Considerations and fervent Supplications to God for Direction and Assistance in the discharge of the Duties of our Places! Or did we meet and improve the *bitter Afflictions* of Life with such Humiliations, Resignations, Acts of Worship, and renewed *Self-Consecrations* to GOD! And did we enter on every *State* of Life, and particularly on the *Marriage-State*, (that most Important Article of our Lives) with so many, such continued and most Importunate Addresses to God, seeking his favour and conduct! and finally, Did we in every *Relation* whereinto the Providence of God brings us thus set ourselves to seek the Temporal and

Eternal Good of all that are related to us!
~~—~~ What Excellent *Christians* should we become? how should we *Shine* in the Church of Christ? *Adorn the Doctrine of GOD our Saviour, and shew forth his Praises?* How should we provoke a holy *Emulation* in one another? provoke each other to *Love and Good Works?* and to the *Glorifying our Father which is in Heaven.*

SUCH therefore let us desire to be in our respective *Places, Trusts, Relations;* in our *Worldly Business,* in every *Condition* and *State* which God orders for us, in all the *Afflictions* of our *Life* and under all the *Smiles* of *Providence* on our outward *Affairs.*

The *Christian Magistrate* may here learn how to act his part *after a Godly sort,* and so the *Merchant* and *Man in Trade & Business:* *Consorts* and *Parents* may here see the *Heart* that becomes their *Relation* under the *Gospel of Christ:* Yea the *Ministers* of *Religion,* as well as all *Private Christians,* may be taught and quicken'd by the bright *Transcripts* of *Zeal, Devotion, Diligence, Sincerity* and *Fidelity,* which have been presented here to their *View.* And yet,

I expect to be *censur'd* for exposing *some of these* to the *World:* they were too much the
Privacies

Privacies of my Friend, some may be ready to think, to be told abroad. I mean particularly those *two Instances*, — What he wrote upon his taking the *Oath of a Justice of the Peace*, and upon the Supposal of his *Marrying again*. But I look upon those two Instances as so peculiar and uncommon, of such *Intrinsic Worth* and at the same time such a *Rarity*, that I could not prevail with my self to omit them. For the things appear to me so *Holy* and *Excellent* in themselves before GOD, and if Christians came into the like Spirit and Practice the Benefit would be so vast to Mankind, that I could by no means excuse or justify it to my self, should I have suppress'd them. I know not but we might want some such Publick Example of the Power of Religion in these particular Instances, and they that would reproach them might rather (I fear) reproach and convict themselves by them.

But among all the *Records* of his *Devotion* left by him there is not any of his *Alms*. He was willing (it seems) not to remember these himself, while he noted down the Frames and gracious Workings of his own Soul, to revive the Memory of them, for his future Support and Comfort, or for his quickening

and help in times of Need: He would not trust that *Paper and Ink* which might hereafter Publish it as with *Sound of Trumpet*; He took heed not to let his left hand know what his right hand did in this matter: And let them ever ly in Secret, according to his Desire, never to be seen of Men, and known only to our Father which is in Heaven, who saw them in secret and will reward them openly.

And now were it lawful, one might be ready to say,—— Ah had it pleased the *Wise, the Holy, the Sovereign GOD* to have reprieu'd this Useful Life when under the Sentence of Death, and to have added *Fifteen Tears* more to it, as He did to *Hezekiah's* at his Prayer! But not his Tears nor ours could gain a *Respite*. He was ripe for Heaven, we may humbly think, and we for Judgment; whose Death has been to us but the *Beginning of Sorrows*; for how many *Pious and Excellent Christians*, both Men and Women, have we since that followed to the Grave. This is a very *Awful* thing in the Righteous, and Governing Providence of God, which we ought attentively to consider and seriously to lay to heart. *Help Lord, for the Godly cease and the faithful fail from among the Children of Men!* God charges it as a great
Contempt

Contempt of him and his Judgments, if we do not religiously observe and improve such a *Dispensation*. *Isai. 57. 1. The Righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart, and Merciful Men are taken away, none considering — This were a Sign indeed of an Ungodly Place: for These are no common Deaths. GOD is Contending in them: He is Angry and it becomes us to tremble. They are to be lamented as a Publick Loss, and to be regarded as a Publick Warning.*

A profound *Submission* to God, and Humiliation under his Rebuke, is our Duty. We must see our own Sins and Gods holy Displeasure in *these Bereavements*. Our Sins have *forfeited* and lost those *Blessings*, which it may be were not eno' esteem'd, valu'd and improv'd while we had them with us. And doth it not become us to fear what Judgments may be breaking in upon us, *from which Evil to come* God is taking away his *Righteous Ones*! Who shall fill their Place, and *stand in the Gap*? are there many *rising up*? and what if Death should return and take away these too?

Let us Pray to GOD, the *Father of Light* and the GOD of our *Spirits*, with whom is the *Residue of the SPIRIT*, that He would repair

pair the Breaches. Let us cease from Man whose Breath is in his Nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of? Let us give Thanks to GOD for his Gifts to Men, and give him the Glory of all that is Good in them. Let us have Complacency in the Excellencies of Others, and never envy them for the Grace of GOD to them, but receive them as his Gifts to us. Let us reverence, love and honour Useful Persons wherever we see them, and venerate true Godliness in Whomsoever we behold it. Let us admire it where its Influence is most remote from us, as we have pleasure in beholding the fixed Stars tho' they belong not to our Circle: But as for them whom God makes more immediate Blessings to us, they are to us like the Sun and Moon in our own Heavens, of whose Light & Heat and Pressure we have the daily Benefit. Yea let us endeavour our selves to fill up well our Places, labouring to equal and excel them that are gone before us. Their worthy Deeds call us on, and should fire us with a holy Ambition to be what they have been. So on the Death of Moses God said to Joshua, Now therefore arise Thou. i. e, Take and fill his place, go on where he left. Let us all be inflam'd with a Divine Ambition after Serviceableness

ceableness in our Generation. Let us count it a most *Inglorious* thing and very *Guilty* to be useless and unprofitable. Let us therefore be diligent & *Industrious* in our respective Incumbent Duties, and count Negligence and *Sloth* a scandalous and criminal thing in our selves or others. For no worthy thing was ever done without care and pains, and Sloth is a meanness of Soul, a poverty of Spirit, and stupidity of Mind. Let us be *thankful* to God for the *Honour* his Providence does us, whereinfoever it pleases him to use us in doing Service to his Name and Interest. But let such distinguish'd *Persons* be the more *lowly* and humble themselves: As the Meekness of *Moses* adorned his Dignity and Services. Nothing is *meaner* nor more distant from true Merit than an Air of *Pride*, nor any thing *fouler* than its *bloat*.

Once more, Let us *Educate* our *Children* carefully and vertuously, that by the help of GOD we may leave a *Godly Seed*, not unworthy of the Name and Character of their *Fathers*; but that when we are dead and gone they may rise up in the Spirit of our *Pious Ancestors*. *But rid me and deliver me from the hand of strange Children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, &c.*

And

And Finally, While we are serving our Generation as well as we can according to the Will of God, *let us be daily looking and preparing for our own Death.* Our Death might have given the Warning to others, or they being our Warning our turn may be to morrow. *Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour.* Only bewit our care that we *finish well* after a holy Life : that we may be *Blessings* in the World while we live in it, and may go out of it *esteem'd and desir'd*; that we may leave a *Name* behind us among the *Just* departed in CHRIST, and our *Spirits* may be gather'd to *them made perfect* in Heaven ; That while the *Eye* sees us it may *bless* us, and when it is to *see* us no more it may drop a decent *Tear* over us, and the *Heart* be comforted concerning us, because it cannot mourn without *Hope*.

F I N I S.

r
o
h
h
r
o
r
e
t
e
d
s
d
s
o
e
it
n
o
o
v
l
es
t
t
t



